



The “Mighty Great Hedges” of Devon

A pleasant half day circular walk with gentle ascents/descents. Walking is on quiet roads and public footpaths.

5 MILES | CIRCULAR

Line East Devon Line

Start/End Feniton station

Overview

There are 33,000 miles of banked hedges in Devon, many dating back 600 years or more and traditionally built with layers of heavy rocks, backfilled with soil and stones or turf. Trees and shrubs growing out of the bank were 'laid', whilst individual trees allowed to grow to maturity. The result is an enduring legacy of mighty hedges, which provide shelter for livestock, food during the hardest months, home for an abundance of beneficial plants insects and wildlife, an autumn feast of berries and nuts.

In spring the hedges are full with wild garlic, bluebells and dog's mercury, all characteristic of ancient woodland. Later in the season come primroses and celandines, violets and purple orchids, red campion, stitchwort and bluebells, foxgloves and cow parsley, dog rose, honeysuckle, hemp agrimony and meadowsweet. All these plants provide nectar and pollen sources for insects and seeds for birds in autumn and winter.

At the base of the banks live grass snakes, lizards and slow worms; hedgehogs, dormice, stoats, weasels and badgers use hedges for cover and food. Birds nesting in the hedges include Hedge Sparrow, Robin, Blackbird, Song Thrush, Whitethroat, Pied Wagtail, Yellowhammer, Chaffinch and Linnet. It is thought that the Devon hedges are home to as many as half a million pairs of birds breeding in spring/summer and over 2000 different species of plants and animals.



Directions

From Feniton Station, turn right and cross the road, with level crossing to your right.

Take the road to Talaton, with orchard to your left ([photo 1](#)). Just before a right-hand bend take the public footpath to your right, through a metal walker's gate and into a small field. Continue straight ahead and take the track over the railway bridge at the far end.

Follow the track to a farm yard, go straight through and turn left when you come to a metalled lane ([photo 2 & 3](#)).

Follow the lane to a cross roads and turn left, signposted Talaton ([photo 4](#)).

At the next junction, turn right over a small bridge ([photos 5, 6 & 7](#)) and then left, continue along to next to a red brick farm house with two bricked up windows and turn left. This lane takes you back over the railway bridge ([photo 8](#)).

Continue along the lane after the bridge ([photo 9](#)) until you come to a clearly marked public footpath on your left.

Go through a metal walker's gate and follow the track straight ahead, avoiding turns to right or left until you come to a gate into woodland, where you turn left, walking across Escot Park ([photo 10](#)), designed by Capability Brown.

Walk past Escot House to your right and down to a set of double gates onto a track. Follow the track over a bridge and through a farm yard and past an orchard. ([photo 11](#)) Just past Clapperdale Cottage, you will join the concrete road which goes to Iron Bridge. Just before the junction onto main road at Iron Bridge take a footpath up to your left and cross a stile into a field ([photo 12](#)). Follow the track up to the top of the field and turn left, look for a metal walkers gate to your right and follow the track around to the right, following the field edge all the way round to a farm gate with waymarked stile on your right.

Cross the stile into field and straight ahead back to the road via a gate and another stile. Turn right and return to station with orchard now on your right.



1



2



3



4



5



6



7



8



9



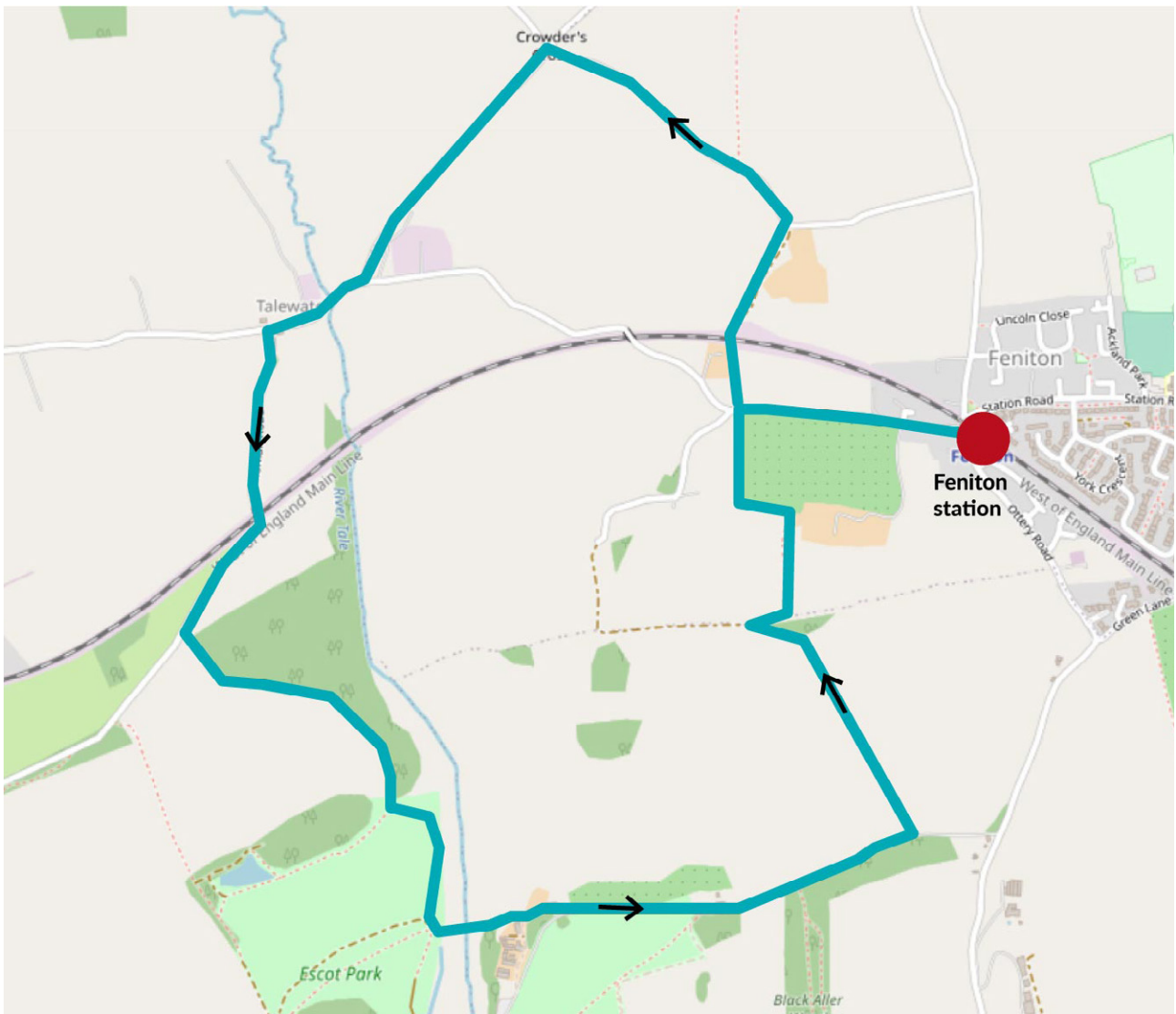
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11



12



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Train times

- [SOUTHWESTERNRAILWAY.COM](https://www.southwesternrailway.com)
- 03457 48 49 50

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All public rights of way cross private land, so please keep to paths and keep dogs on leads. Occasionally work may mean diversions are put in place. If so, please follow local signs.

These directions are intended as a guide only. It is always advisable to carry the relevant OS Map whilst out walking.

