



Walk 16. Brayford, Whitefield Down and High Bray.

- 11.9 miles, 4 hours 40 minutes. Ascents and descents of 610 metres.

Terrain: Roads, tracks and fields, parts uneven and muddy.

Access: By car, park in Brayford close to the Methodist church where you are not inconveniencing other traffic (SS 687 347, EX32 7QH). There is also usually space for two or three cars on the road between Kinsford Gate and Sloley Stone, at the northernmost corner of the walk (SS 726 376, [3] on the plan). There is one bus to Brayford each way from South Molton on Fridays; get off at the Brayfordhill stop and walk into Brayford.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

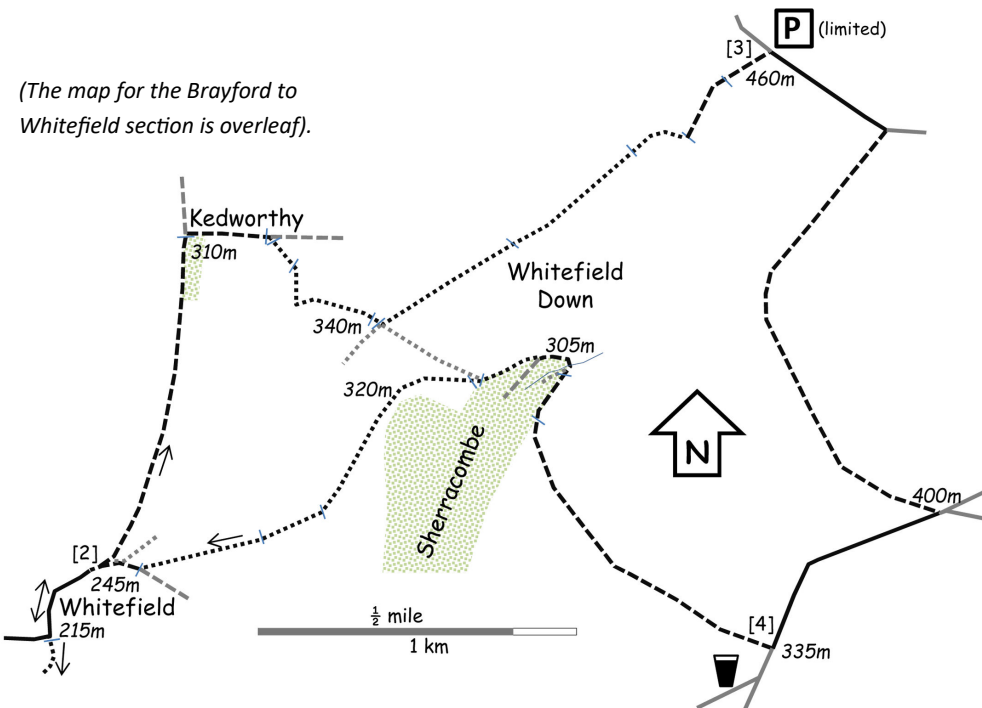
Refreshments: The Poltimore Arms is just off the route; nothing in Brayford.

THE SOUTH-WESTERN EDGE OF EXMOOR ATTRACTS RELATIVELY FEW WALKERS, perhaps because of the difficulty of finding circular off-road routes. This walk combines rolling country and a secluded river valley with the high downs of southern Exmoor. It reaches a height of 460 metres, providing panoramic views across North Devon from Hartland Point to Dartmoor. The walk starts in the attractive village of Brayford before heading up on to Whitefield Down, returning south on the Tarka Trail through woods alongside a stream, sometimes known as the Little Owl River. The final section is along a stony track to the hamlet of High Bray, then across fields back to Brayford. The walk easily divides into two shorter loops.

From the church in Brayford, go over the River Bray bridge and turn left towards Lydcott. Walk to the top of the hill and come to a crossroads (15mins, [1]); turn right towards Whitefield and Kedworthy. Follow the road down into a valley, across a small bridge (your first encounter with the Little Owl River), and steeply up the other side. The road bends sharply left and heads through the Whitefield farms. Go over a cattle grid (37mins, [2]) and take the left fork towards Kedworthy. In a little under 20 minutes, go through a gate to come to Kedworthy Farm and turn right to go through the farmyard (not past the front of the house). Go through a gate, then immediately through another gate diagonally opposite to enter a field. Dartmoor will be visible to the right on a clear day. Head just to the right and go over a stile. Turn right and follow the boundary of the field until, at the far corner, go through first one then another gate. Turn left after the second gate on a path alongside the field boundary. This goes through several gates then becomes a vehicle track. After passing a small tumulus, it arrives at a road (1hr20mins, [3]).

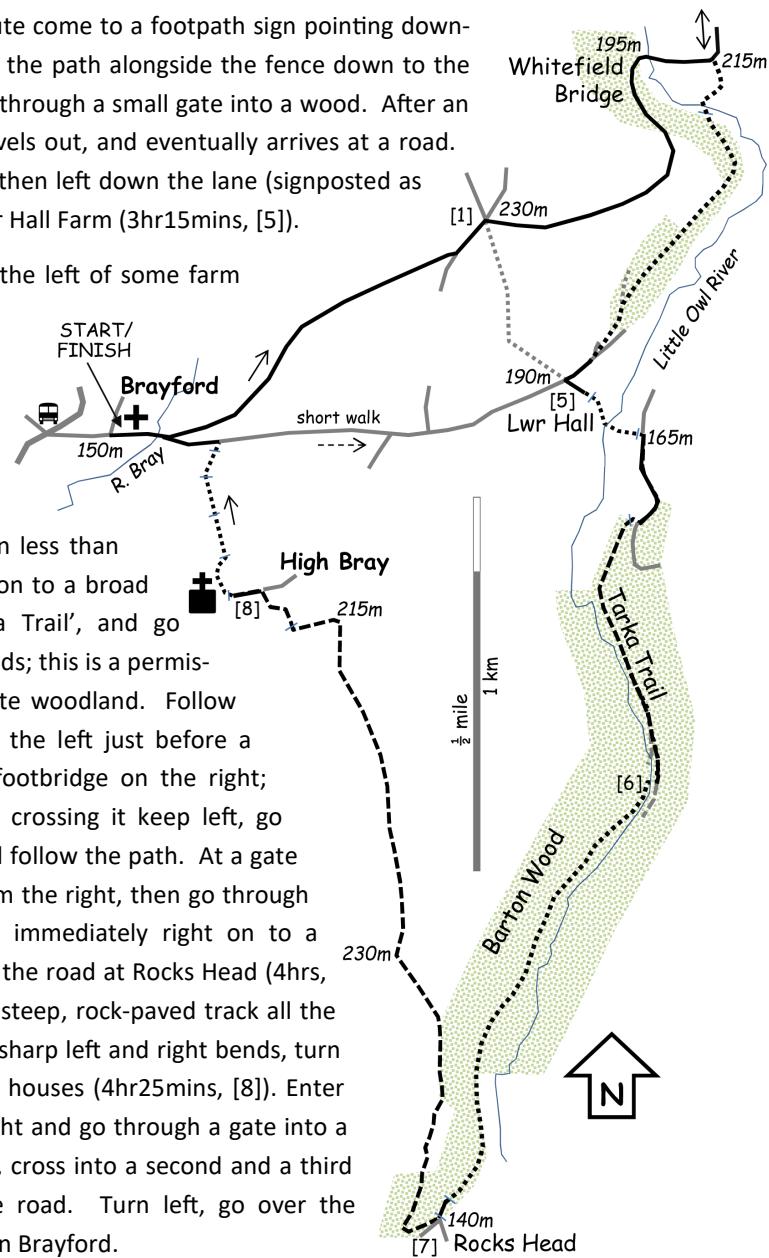
Turn right on the road: in good visibility you will have far-reaching views across North Devon, from Dartmoor to the left around to Hartland Point. At the second line of trees, where the road bends left, turn right on a roughly-surfaced lane. This heads gradually downhill; in about 25 minutes come to a road at a crossroads, and turn right. There are more views across lush North Devon farmland to Dartmoor on the left. The road soon bends left; three or four minutes later, turn right on a track towards Whitefield and Kedworthy (2hr5mins, [4]). (The Poltimore Arms, quirky and welcoming, is a minute or two further down the road).

The track starts off level, then goes through a gate and drops towards a stream; after another gate follow the path left around the end of the valley, starting up the hill on the other side. Go through a field gate, then turn immediately left through a kissing gate towards Whitefield. Keep roughly level, between the trees on the left and a gate in a fence. Don't go through the gate, but head to the left, keeping the fence on your right. Pass a second field gate, then come to a kissing gate. Go through, and head across the field. Go through another gate that soon becomes visible, then head to the opposite left-hand corner of the field. Turn right here on a track, then through a gate with a footpath sign and over a cattle grid (2hr50mins, [2]). Briefly rejoin your outward route through the farms. The track becomes a surfaced road, and heads steeply downhill; just as it bends to the right, turn left on a signposted footpath (this was closed as at May 2018 due to a crumbling footbridge; follow any detours that are indicat-



ed). In less than a minute come to a footpath sign pointing downhill to the right. Follow the path alongside the fence down to the stream, cross it, and go through a small gate into a wood. After an initial climb the path levels out, and eventually arrives at a road. Turn right on the road, then left down the lane (signposted as the Tarka Trail) to Lower Hall Farm (3hr15mins, [5]).

Follow the footpath to the left of some farm buildings, go through a gate, down steps, and back over the stream on the substantial footbridge. Cross a field to an iron gate and turn right on to the road. In less than five minutes turn right on to a broad track signposted 'Tarka Trail', and go through a gate into woods; this is a permissive path through private woodland. Follow the stream, keeping to the left just before a ford. Look out for a footbridge on the right; (3hr35mins, [6]); after crossing it keep left, go over a plank bridge, and follow the path. At a gate join a forestry track from the right, then go through another gate and turn immediately right on to a rough track, just before the road at Rocks Head (4hrs, [7]). Climb this initially steep, rock-paved track all the way to High Bray: after sharp left and right bends, turn left in front of a row of houses (4hr25mins, [8]). Enter the churchyard, turn right and go through a gate into a field. Keep to the right, cross into a second and a third field, and come to the road. Turn left, go over the bridge, and arrive back in Brayford.



Brayford and High Bray (● 4.3 miles, ascents and descents of 225 metres). Start as for the main walk but keep right after the bridge, following the road in the direction of Simonsbath. In ten to fifteen minutes turn right on the lane to Lower Hall Farm, rejoining the main walk at the 3hr15-minute point ([5]).



Whitefield Down

Brayford and Whitefield Down (● 9.2 miles, ascents and descents of 440 metres). Follow the main walk as far as the turn-off to Lower Hall Farm ([5]), then continue ahead along the road back to Brayford. Alternatively, if the walk is started from Whitefield Down, the descent into Brayford can be missed out by turning right on the track to Kedworthy just before the cattle grid ([2]; total 6 miles).

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