



Walk 39A. Wimbleball, Bury and Haddon Hill.

- 7.6 miles, ascents and descents of 400 metres. 3 hours constant walking, allow around 4 hours.

Terrain: Generally well-kept paths and tracks, with a potentially muddy stretch near the beginning. There is a steady climb from Bury to Haddon Hill.

Access: Park in the signposted pay and display car park on the western side of the lake (SS 965 308, close to TA22 9NU; £). Access is from the road between Brompton Regis and Ralegh's Cross. Alternatively, park at Haddon Hill car park: it is on a sharp bend on the B3190 by a low house between Upton and Morebath (SS 969 285; donation). No buses.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: Seasonal cafés at the lakeside car park and on the road to Brompton Regis.

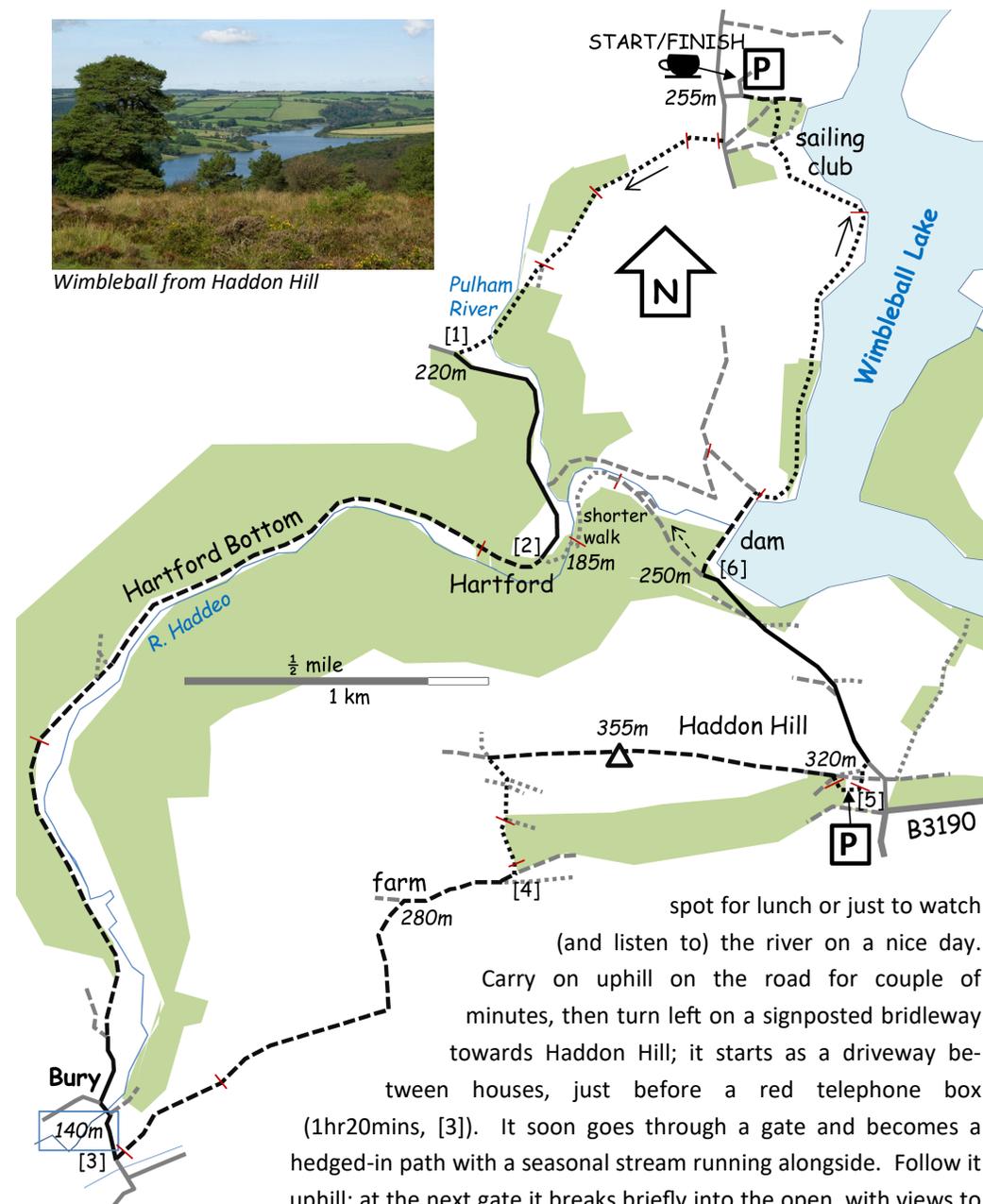
This walk heads south-west from Wimbleball to visit the hamlet of Hartford, at the junction of the Pulham and Haddeo rivers, and follows the Haddeo through Hartford Bottom to the picturesque village of Bury, where there is a ford and an old packhorse bridge. A steady climb brings you to Haddon Hill, one of the few areas of open moorland in the Brendon Hills and a popular area for strolling; there are views across Wimbleball and beyond from the top, and this is a good spot to see Exmoor ponies. The return is across the dam and along the lakeside as for walk 39.

From the lakeside 'hub' car park, start the walk by returning to the lane and turning left. In a couple of minutes come to a house and immediately beyond it turn right through a gate on a signposted footpath. Keep the field edge on your left; go through the next (left-hand) gate, and you will shortly see Brompton Regis on the hillside to your right. After a third gate, come above the Pulham River valley and follow the path around to the left and gradually downwards. Keep right at a fork just past a pedestrian gate, then descend to walk alongside the river. Cross over on a footbridge and follow the path until it meets a road (18mins, [1]); turn left. The road rejoins the river and, ten minutes later, passes some houses on the left; this is the hamlet of Hartford, where the Pulham joins the Haddeo as it comes down from the Wimbleball dam (30mins, [2]). What is now an unsurfaced lane now continues parallel with the river for two miles.

Thirty minutes or so from Hartford, pass two isolated houses. Fifteen minutes later, come to more houses and walk into the attractive little village of Bury. Turn left at the junction and cross a stone bridge next to a ford. There is a seat next to the bridge at the far end, an idyllic



Wimbleball from Haddon Hill



spot for lunch or just to watch (and listen to) the river on a nice day. Carry on uphill on the road for couple of minutes, then turn left on a signposted bridleway towards Haddon Hill; it starts as a driveway between houses, just before a red telephone box (1hr20mins, [3]). It soon goes through a gate and becomes a hedged-in path with a seasonal stream running alongside. Follow it uphill; at the next gate it breaks briefly into the open, with views to the left over the Haddeo Valley. When you arrive at a farm continue ahead on the signposted bridleway, now a broad farm track. A gate on the right gives views south over rolling hills towards Morebath. Follow the track left where it forks. In less than a minute turn left on an almost hidden footpath (1hr55mins, [4]), upwards through a kissing gate and into woods. Head upwards close to the edge of the woods, then bear slightly right to go through a gate

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on to open land at Haddon Hill. Continue ahead past some pony pens and come to a metal trough; bear left on the second crossing path. A minute later, a village appears in the distant hills ahead; this is Brompton Regis. Turn right here on a broad crossing track and follow it uphill. Wimbleball soon comes into view on the left, and there is a trig point a short distance to the right. Follow the track as it gradually descends towards pine trees. Go through a gate into the Haddon Hill car park (2hr20mins, [5]). There are toilets here, but no refreshments.

From the car park walk to the shelter and toilets, then head to the left and go over a stile marked with a sign for a 1¹/₂-mile circular walk. Head towards the lake, cross a track then just afterwards turn right on another track about 50m in front of a spreading pine tree. Soon come to a surfaced lane and turn left. Ignore any side-turnings; in under ten minutes come to the dam, where there is a picnic spot with several flat stones set in an area of grass (2hr30mins, [6]). Turn right to go over the dam, then at the end right again and through a gate. Follow the footpath along the lakeside. At first most signs of human activity are hidden from view unless there are boats out on the lake, but after passing a wooden race hut the path rounds a headland and leads behind the sailing club. Cross an access drive and follow the signs past an adventure play area and across a camp site, finally turning left to return to the café and car park (3hrs).

Short walk: Hartford and Wimbleball Dam (● 3.3 miles, ascents and descents of 160 metres). Follow the main walk to Hartford ([2]). Turn left on a drive just before a yellow-painted stone house ('Hartford Lodge'), then take the grassy bridleway ('Upton 2'). The River Haddeo is in front of you: turn left, cross the footbridge, then rejoin the bridleway. Soon join a concrete track, which takes you uphill to the southern end of the dam ([6]). Turn left along the dam and rejoin the main walk to return to the start.

Shorter walk from Haddon Hill (● 5.4 miles, ascents and descents of 310m). Starting from Haddon Hill car park, this route takes a short-cut to miss out the lakeside path and Wimbleball 'hub'. From the car park ([5]), follow the main walk to the dam (the 2hr30min point, [6]). Now continue straight ahead towards Hartford. The track drops down into the river valley; when it loops to the right, go straight ahead alongside the river. A minute later go through a gate, then shortly after turn left on a grassy ride. Go through a gate, then turn right over a wooden footbridge. Rejoin the bridleway at a ford; it crosses a garden, then comes in front of a stone house to join the lane heading for Bury. Turn left here and rejoin the main walk at the 30min point ([2]).

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