



LET'S GO FOR A WALK

From: Crowcombe Heathfield station to Stogumber station. Distance: 3 miles.

Route: Staying as close as is legally possible, alongside, or parallel to, the West Somerset Railway's line. Do not walk on the actual railway tracks. Only cross the line at a recognized crossing point (road bridge, level crossing, public footpath crossing point), taking great care.

Even in ideal conditions, this path is not suitable for prams or pushchairs. And good walking boots will always be necessary. It is possible the route will pass through fields containing cattle, sheep and horses.

DIRECTIONS

From the main station building at Crowcombe Heathfield, walk up the road northbound (passing the new Baker's Orchard houses on your right). At the T-junction (with Puff Cottage – the old stationmaster's house – on your left) turn left and cross the railway line on an overbridge. Follow the road, heading straight on at the first junction (where the old-fashioned finger signpost reads "Stogumber 3.5 miles"). Keep on this road, passing Deer Lodge and Heathfield Farm.



A little further on and the railway track appears close by on your right. Keep on straight at the next junction. (The old-fashioned finger signpost now reads "Lower Vexford". Do not cross the railway track at the Roebuck Lane crossing).

Just as the road begins to climb there is a dirt track to the right (with a small corrugated iron shed that houses 'refuse wheelie bins').



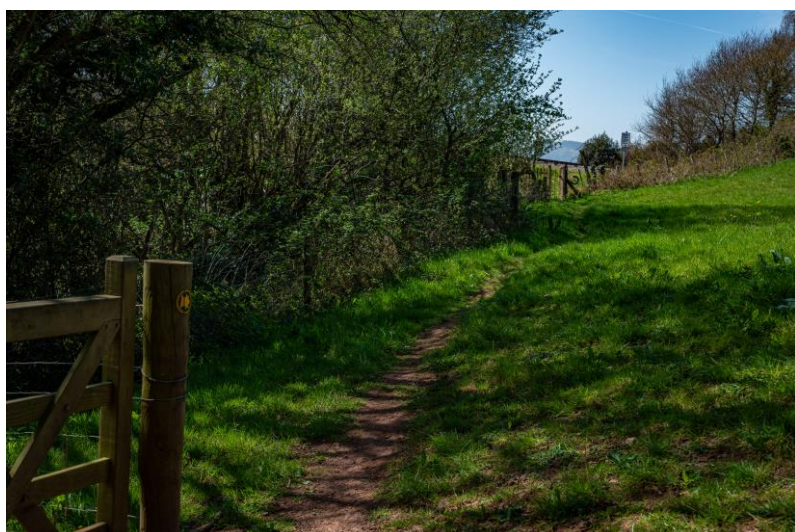
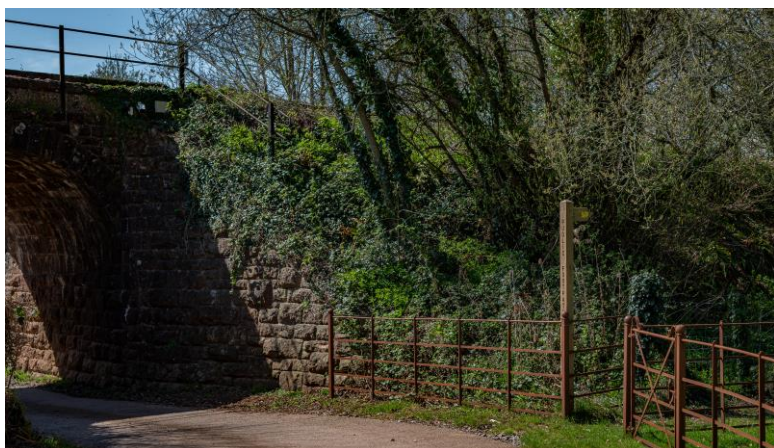
Turn right onto this dirt track (it is a public footpath). At the tall ornamental gates, use the pedestrian access way to the left in order to continue.



Keep following what is now a concrete track (this is a public footpath). The concrete track crosses a stream and goes underneath the railway.



Immediately on your left, there is a public footpath sign. Follow this footpath and cross another stream. Then (at a gate), turn left and follow that footpath.



Follow the footpath and cross over the railway track (take care, as a train may be approaching).



Then, keep following the path as it contours through a field. The footpath accesses the next field using a gap in a large bush of brambles.



This gap can be very muddy . If you are absolutely desperate, you can circumvent this mud by veering off to the right top-corner of the field where there is another gap in the hedgerow (hard up against the boundary with the railway land). Walk down to a small stream, step across it (there is no bridge here), then follow the stream down until you rejoin the original path through the brambles. This bit is rather overgrown.

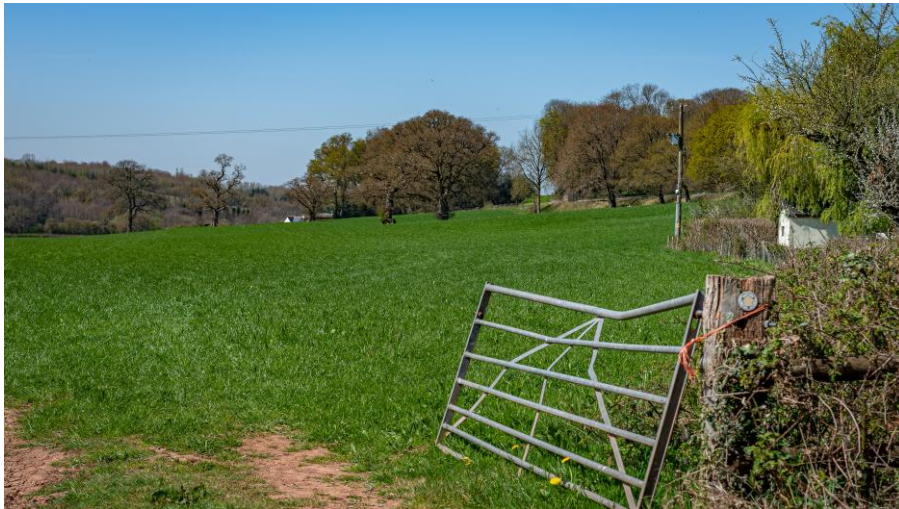
Pass through a kissing gate and head across the next field.



A stile opposite a big house brings you out of the field and onto a small road.



Cross this road and access the field on the other side, through a farm gate.



This is a public footpath. The footpath you want goes straight across this field from the farm gate. (At this point, the railway is on your right). Sometimes this field has crops in it (often rather tall crops in peak summer). Sometimes it is ploughed up. Sometimes you can see where people before you have walked, sometimes you can't. Take a high line across this field, as the lower you go the boggier it gets. Whatever the state of this field, make your way across it towards a house's roof which you can just see in the distance. Keep walking across the field towards this house. Your route will be parallel to the railway on your right. On approaching the house, this field has been unpleasantly boggy. The higher up in the field you stay the drier it is. To the left of the house, the footpath exits the field onto a small road via a farm gate. The house is called Leigh Mill Farm.



Turn right, up the road (which climbs sharply). Before you reach a bridge over the railway, there is a footpath on the left.

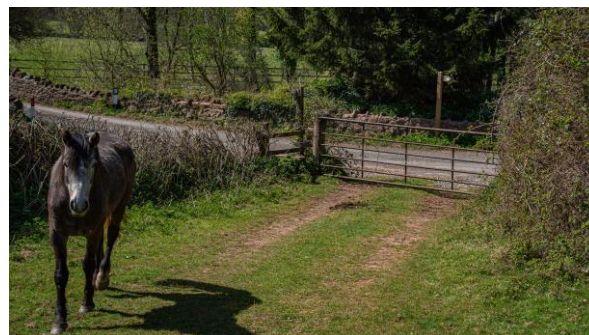


Pass through the old-fashioned kissing gate and set out across the field (staying close to the line of the railway on your right). At an extra wide farm gate, the footpath crosses into the next field via a stile on the right. This stile is hard up against the boundary of the railway land). From here on, a simple wire fence on your left guides you to a further two stiles, which you cross.



From the second of these stiles, you can see a walkers' gate (ahead and slightly to your left). Cross over to that walkers' gate.

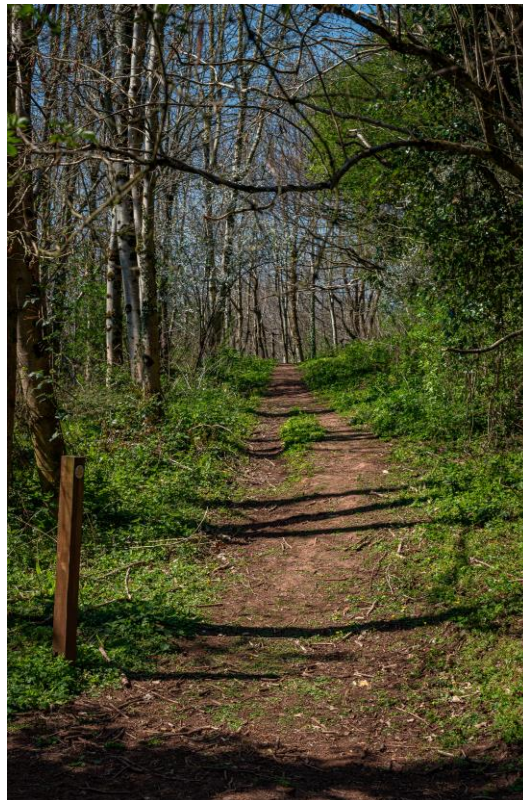
This paddock is muddy, probably because it often contains horses or sheep. From this walkers' gate you can see a farm gate ahead, a tall public footpath post and a small road. Head towards the road. Access this road using a stile in the hedge on the left.



Turn right, up the road towards a railway overbridge. Head onwards, passing a house called Watermead. Just before the railway overbridge, turn left onto a public footpath.

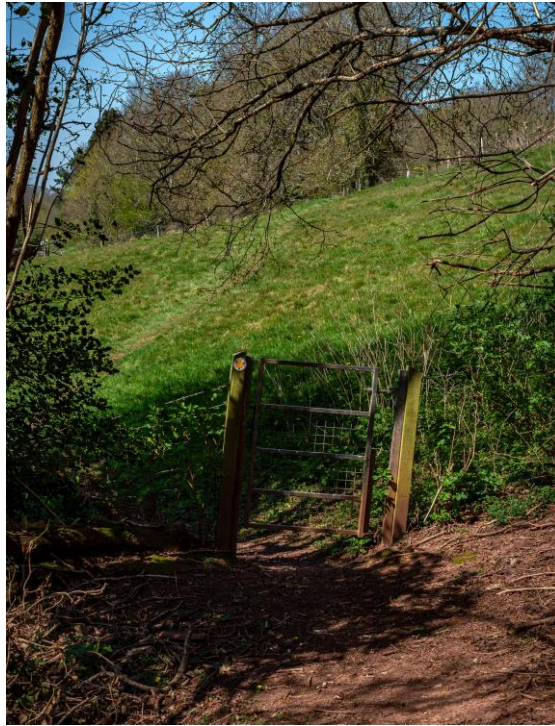


This footpath keeps high and close to the railway, with a farmhouse immediately below you. Just after the stone walls of a derelict barn (on your left), the footpath veers left (away from the railway). Warning: do not be tempted by the 'tunnel' under the railway or two other vague paths on your right just here. The real footpath keeps on, heading away from the railway, until there is a footpath direction sign (on a medium-sized post) on your right. Once you have found that post, follow the yellow arrow sign on it towards the right (and slightly upwards).

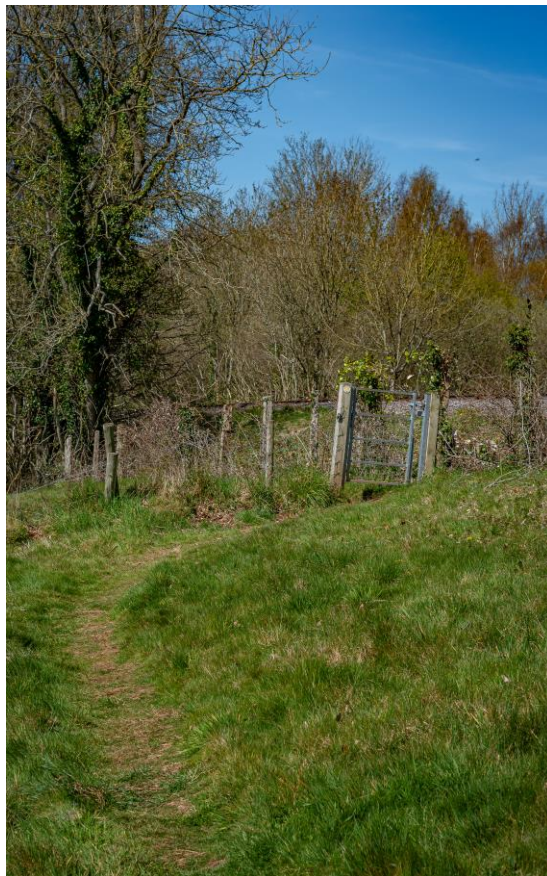


The footpath now begins to head through a wood. It also becomes wider, easier underfoot and clearer to spot.

The footpath exits the wood via a walkers' gate.



From this gate, climb diagonally to the top of the grassy paddock (closest to the railway land boundary). Here, there is a second walkers' gate. Pass through this second gate and stay close to the railway boundary fence.



At a third walkers' gate, cross a tiny stream (possibly non-existent in summer) and follow the footpath upwards. When the path levels off, a house and some thick bamboo will appear on your left.



Follow the path to a second group of buildings (on your left), where it connects to a 'dirt track' driveway (running parallel to the railway, which is on your right). When you reach a small road at the end of the driveway (with a railway overbridge on your immediate right), Stogumber railway station is in front (and above) you.



CONGRATULATIONS, YOU JUST WALKED 3 MILES.