

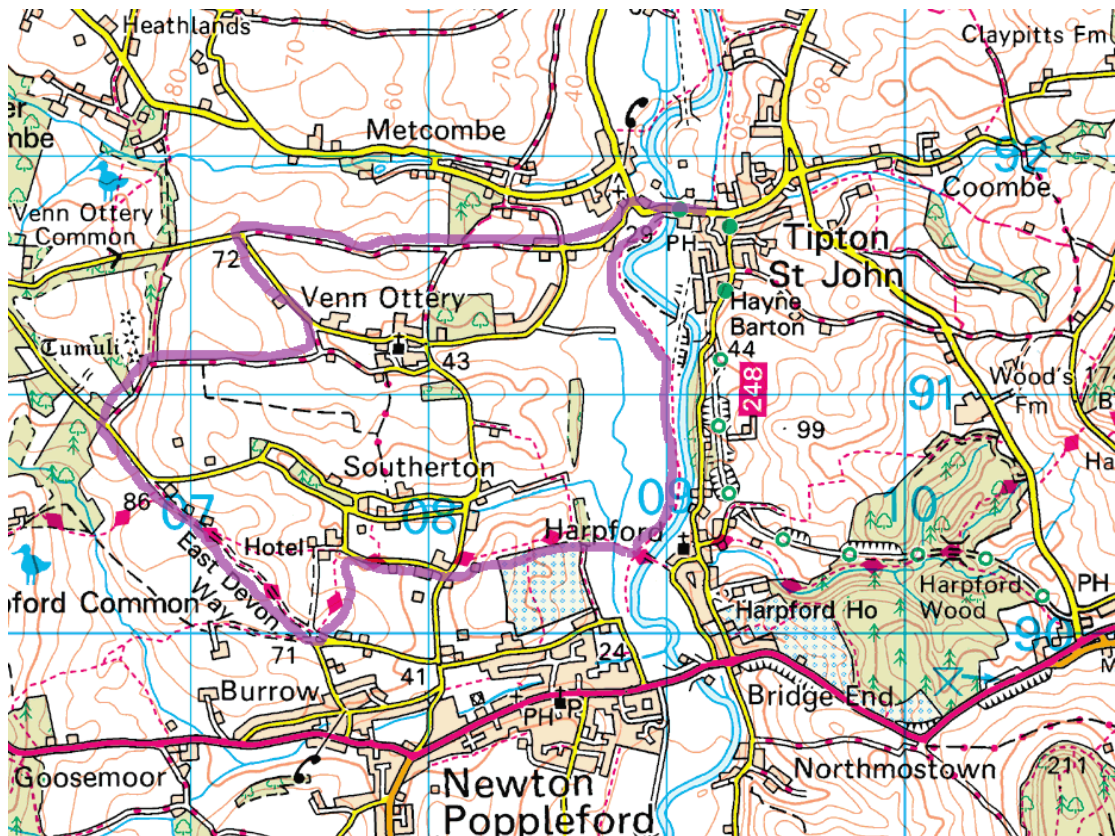
# A Circular Walk from Tipton St John

**Distance:** 4.5 miles

**Time:** Two hours

A note of warning - there's one very wet patch – so boots are recommended at all times!

**Directions to start:** Leave Beer and head initially towards Sidmouth. Stay on the A 3052 through Sidford. Once past Waitrose on the left, look for the Bowd Inn set back on the right. Turn right and drive past the pub. After 1 mile you will reach a cross roads immediately after a bus stop. Turn right here to reach Tipton St John village centre. Park in the playing field car park, which is opposite Tipton Garage in the centre of the village. The village has a pub and a post office.



**The Walk:** There are many pleasant walks from Tipton St John, but one of the nicest is to the RSPB common at Aylesbeare, returning along part of the East Devon Way to Harpford and then back along the River Otter. The walk starts from the village playing field car park, turning right over the bridge to the church where you turn left to follow the road towards Venn Ottery.

Go up a steep but short hill and just past the Venn Ottery village sign the road bears left, but the walk is straight ahead up Green Lane, marked "Unsuitable for Motors." The tarmac lane soon becomes a rough track with an initial steep ascent before levelling – keep straight ahead on this track for nearly a mile. When you reach a tarmac road again turn left, signposted to Venn Ottery.

You pass a barn on your right and a few hundred yards along find the first track to the right – immediately before a farm on the left. Follow this track up and around to the right. There's a short section in a dip which is often under water and boots will be necessary.

Continue up the steepish track and round to the left, levelling towards the end. Turn left down the tarmac road for a couple of hundred yards, branching right where the road forks. There's a public footpath sign and house nameplate "Benchams." To your right is the RSPB nature reserve, which has public footpaths running through it – you can access this by a track to the right. The walk itself keeps straight ahead skirting the edge of the reserve and now following part of the East Devon Way.

Immediately before you reach a tarmac road, the East Devon Way and this walk both turn left over a stile into a field. The signpost carries the East Devon Way's distinctive foxglove waymark. The path crosses the centre of the field, dropping to a stile towards the far end of the left hand hedge. In the next field turn right towards the bay-windowed house, which is called "Badgers Hill."

Turn right when you reach the lane and follow this to the end, crossing with care a slightly busier country lane. At this T-junction, head opposite and slightly left through a field gate, which is again distinguished by the East Devon way marker. Keep to the right hand hedge, over a stile and climbing to the top of the field to another stile.

In the next field - a fruit tree orchard - go through the avenue of apple trees, following the yellow arrow waymarks. Keep heading downhill following the path down some rough steps over a stile, turning briefly right in a band of trees and then left over a footbridge and through a kissing gate into a field.

Cross the field to the footbridge and gate in the opposite hedge, then towards the red metal footbridge which spans the River Otter to Harpford. Do not cross this footbridge, unless you wish to walk around Harpford village itself, but turn left to follow the west bank of the River Otter back to Tipton St John. It's then a short step over the bridge back to the playing field car park.