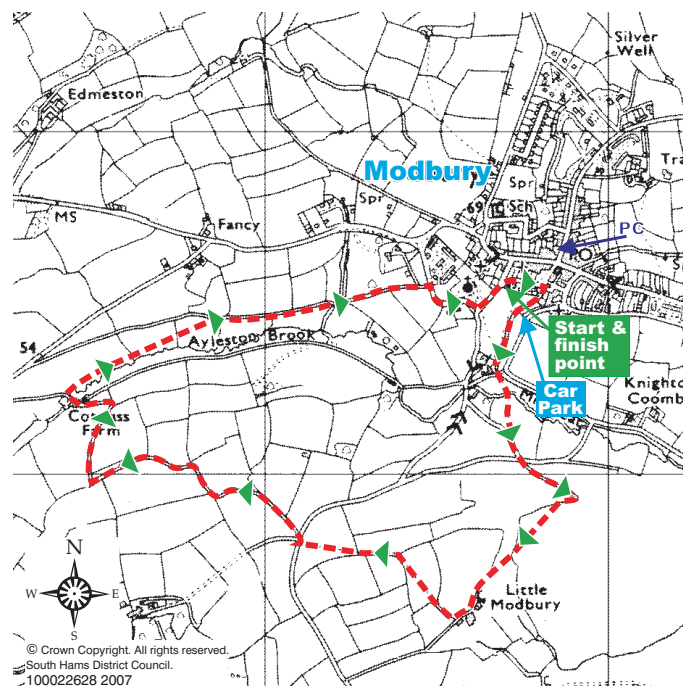


Modbury

The handsome and friendly market town of Modbury hosts a great little walk offering wide open views across South Devon, the rich life of Devon hedgerows, and echoes through history from the English Civil War.

Start:	Poundwell Meadow Car Park, Modbury
Distance:	2.75 miles
Circular Walk:	Yes
Grade:	Moderate
Terrain:	Fairly even underfoot. Field footpaths, with some muddy sections; green lanes; surfaced roads.
Obstacles & Steep Gradients:	11 stiles; 1 flight of steps; 1 steep ascent; 1 steep descent
Public transport:	Bus service 93 from Dartmouth, Kingsbridge and Plymouth. For information on public transport in South Hams please call Traveline on 0871 200 22 33 www.traveline.org.uk .
Refreshment stops:	Several pubs, cafes and restaurants in Modbury.
Toilets:	Public toilets in Brownston St. From car park return to main street, cross over and up Brownston St. Toilets 50m on left.
Parking:	Poundwell Meadow Car Park. Pay and display.
Accommodation:	Please contact Modbury Tourist Information Centre 01548 830159 or visit www.modburytic.org.uk
Other facilities:	Public payphone at car park. Variety of shops in Modbury.
OS map:	Explorer 0L20
Grid Ref:	SX658515



Directions

1. Walk through car park away from town and bear left by recycling facilities onto public footpath.
2. At the waymarker post go straight on over stone stile and through field across stream. Turn left up lane.
3. At the junction cross and follow public footpath up old green lane.
4. Follow left hand field edge. After 100m, turn left over two stiles then cut up over brow of hill to right. Cut across next field to left, then skirt farm to the right. Turn right through metal gate along hedgebank. At next waymarker cut across field to far left corner. Follow next field edge and cross a further field, dropping down to right.
5. At the road, take the green lane opposite and to the right. Just past the bridge over the stream at the bottom, turn onto public footpath through fields.
6. Cross the footbridge and continue along field edge. Where path meets green lane, turn right.
7. At the road turn right past the church. Turn left at next junction and follow lane back down to car park.



Heritage

Modbury has existed since at least Saxon times, when it was known as Moot Burgh - a moot being a meeting place. It was an important trading centre even then, and markets and fairs were held regularly in



the town for hundreds of years. Modbury grew prosperous on the wool industry, and the whole process from raw fleece to finished cloth was carried out here. The wool trade declined in the 1800's, but the town remained an important stopping off place for coach travellers, with 12 inns to its name.



During the English Civil War, two battles were fought at Modbury. 8000 Parliamentarian troops advanced from Kingsbridge in 1643 and attacked the Royalist defenders of the town. The battle raged for 12 hours in the fields,

streets and houses. Out numbered four to one, the Royalists eventually retreated down Runaway Lane - the green lane which leads you back to the town.

The Parish Church of St George can trace its origins back a thousand years or more. At one time a Benedictine priory stood next to the church, linked to an abbey in Normandy. The church itself suffered greatly during the Civil War, when Oliver Cromwell's Parliamentarian soldiers "stabled their horses in the church and destroyed everything on which they could lay their hands".



Landscape

Looking past Modbury from the hills above the town, the two domed hills behind are Western Beacon, to the left, and Ugborough

Beacon, at the southern edge of Dartmoor. Below these and to the left is the town of Ivybridge. Further left again and more distant, the white mounds and excavations of the china clay works at Shaugh prior can be made out. The more pointed hill on the skyline behind Modbury and to the right is Brent Hill.

Much of the walk follows hedgebanks, along the green lanes and field edges. These boundaries were once maintained by

'casting up' slumped earth back onto the bank. The hedges on top were 'laid' by cutting almost all the way through the wood of a young tree and laying it down on its side along the bank, where it would continue growing.

A traditional Devon hedgebank had two 'rails' of these laid plants running along each shoulder of the bank. Farmers walked along the top of the bank between the two rails of hedge while surveying their livestock. In recent years the traditional ways of creating and caring for, hedgerows have been making a comeback.



Wildlife

Hazel, Hawthorn and Blackthorn are the most common hedgerow trees along the route.

Hazel can be identified by its silverish-brown bark and chunky oval, slightly furry-feeling leaves. The dark-barked blackthorn, with its stout thorns, produces its white flowers in early spring before the small oval leaves emerge. Hawthorn, on the other hand produces its 'May blossom' later, when its lobed leaves are already out. In autumn it is hung with dusky red berries, whilst the blackthorn's fruit is the blueish-black sloe berry.

Hedgerows are great sources of food and shelter for all kinds of wildlife, including many birds, and small animals such as voles and mice. These hedgebanks are also home to a variety of ferns. Among those ferns with typical long 'fern-ish' fronds are the make fern and the lady fern, their leaves often arrayed in clusters. The Polypody has smooth, toothed leaves found in clumps along Runaway Lane.

Navelwort also finds a home on the hedgebanks. This plant has small fleshy medallion-shaped leaves held on the end of short stiff stalks. In summer the plants throw up spikes of greenish-white shaped flowers.

