



## A Walk From Pinhoe To Broadclyst via Poltimore (Moderate)

**Distance:** 5.05 miles one-way. Option of return via bus (No. 1 Service) from Broadclyst, or retrace route (for a total of 10.1 miles).

**Time:** Approximately 2 hours in one direction (Pinhoe to Broadclyst).

**BE AWARE: FLOODS:** Following heavy rains the last section of the route between Poltimore and Broadclyst may be impassable if the river Clyst has burst its banks. Do not attempt to wade, you will have to turn back and retrace your route

**Video Guide** Part one: [https://youtu.be/Sc2z\\_u7mNjY](https://youtu.be/Sc2z_u7mNjY) Part Two: <https://youtu.be/YIYq9WdsUSc>

**Summary:** From Pinhoe on the outskirts of Exeter, to Broadclyst via Poltimore. Much to see including: nature, wildlife, history and archaeology. Fine views over Exeter, and over Culm and Clyst Valleys. Walks ends at Broadclyst where village shop and public toilets are available. Food and drink available at Red Lion Inn, lunchtimes and evenings.

A very varied route. Some on surfaced paths and tracks. Some on unsurfaced footpaths. Some sections on quiet country roads. One long hill climb. A few sections can be very muddy following wet weather, so waterproof boots advised. Some gates, no stiles. Not suitable for buggies, wheelchairs, or mobility scooters.

Return journey: Bus available (Stagecoach no.1 Service) from Broadclyst back to Exeter from near Red Lion Inn on B3181, or retrace route on foot.

**Poltimore House.** If you were intending to visit the lovely Branches Café at Poltimore House and gardens be aware their opening times are limited. Check for details and availability at [BRANCHES CAFE – Poltimore House](#)

**Getting to the Start** BUS: regular L bus service to and from Exeter City Centre to “Heart Of Oak/ Main Street stop in Pinhoe. TRAIN: – Regular Service from Exeter St Davids and Central, to Pinhoe station which is a five minute walk from start point.

**1. Start – Main Street Pinhoe, Exeter.** Opposite the Heart of Oak on Main Street.

And we are off! We will soon leave the busy traffic behind – Head West along Main Street. Fork shallow right into a narrow lane and pass by Pinhoe Library.

**2.** Continue on the lane for only a few metres then take the first right, a shared foot/cycle path up a slight hill across Library Fields.

At the top of the field fork left past the children’s play park and turn right into the footpath beside America Hall, which is Pinhoe’s community hall. It is so named as it was funded by generous donations from the families of World War 2 American servicemen who were stationed in this area prior to D-Day. Keeping the hall on your left go up to the road.

3. Reaching Harrington Lane turn left. Keep going uphill until you see a public footpath sign on your right over the road (if you get to Chancel Lane on your left, you have gone too far!)
4. Cross Harrington Lane and go through the footpath gate follow the path uphill. Looking through the mesh gate ahead you will see a new housing development being constructed in a former quarry of modern date. Beyond the quarry uphill you will just glimpse the tower of Pinhoe church poking up amongst the trees. We will be there in a few minutes! Follow the footpath. It is a steep climb but pause to enjoy the mature hedges as you walk, full of varied wildlife and birdsong throughout the year.
5. Just before you come to a quite road ahead (Church Lane) the path turns left. Follow it to Pinhoe Church.
6. The parish church of Pinhoe, St Michaels and All Angels. Pause to enjoy this amazing historic building that formed the heart of the village community.

**Archaeology** The church building as seen is of late 14<sup>th</sup> century and /early 15<sup>th</sup> century construction, although like many Devon churches it had substantial Victorian restoration. Can you find the worn medieval cross in the Churchyard? Inside the church the font inside is very unusual with a Norman (11<sup>th</sup> Century) bowl and a base that may be Anglo Saxon. The grand house behind the Church was the rectory, and is of early 18<sup>th</sup> century date.

Keeping the church to your right, pass it and turn right between church and rectory. Go through the gate ahead into the lane and turn left.

Keep straight ahead towards the gate, and pass through it into the field, turning to the right and follow the path uphill.

**View** as you go uphill, pause for a moment to look back and enjoy at the great view to the West over the city of Exeter and to the long forested ridge of Haldon Hill beyond.

Continue up the path until you come to a gate.

7. Go through the gate and turn left into the lane. You are walking across the top of Beacon Hill.

**Archaeology** historic documents refer to a beacon here but there is no physical trace of its location.

8. Look out for traffic as you come out onto Cheynegate Lane, and turn right
9. Keep straight on, (past a bridleway on your right, this route leads back towards Exeter, coming out in Beacon Heath).
10. Coming to, and crossing Church Hill, the road that leads along the ridge from Pinhoe, have a care as there can be fast traffic. Our route lies down the narrow path called 'Dandy Lane' directly ahead. Before entering Dandy Lane look over the gate to your left.

**View** you will catch fine views over the edge of the Clyst Valley, Killerton, and the Culm Valley with hills around Silverton beyond.

**Archaeology:** This ridge is believed to be the location of a battle fought in 1001 between Viking invaders who had failed in an attack on Exeter, and Saxon warriors from Devon and Somerset. The Saxons were defeated despite the efforts of a brave Pinhoe priest who sneaked to Exeter to collect much needed arrows. The exact site of the battle, or the graves of the dead, is uncertain.

The hollow way we are about to descend is likely to be an ancient route, made 'hollow' by the erosion of feet and water between hedgebanks that are centuries old.

Walk down the hollow way 'Dandy Lane'. Watch out it can be very uneven, as well as very muddy after rain! On the right pause to look through a gate. Several fields here may have formed part of 'Bamberries', a 19th Century tree nursery of the famed Veitch horticulturalists of Exeter. Also look for wildlife in the rich and diverse hedge along the lane. There are many species of tree here, and in the spring and summer lots of wild flowers.

At the end of the hollow way, the track becomes more open, and levels out, and soon becomes a metalled minor road. Pass cottages on your right and a larger house Rosemead set back on the left where a fine oak tree recently added to the national Ancient Tree Inventory is visible in the fields. For more on the Ancient Tree Inventory, follow the link: [Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust](#)

**11.** At the junction take a left hand turn. Follow the road and pass more cottages on your left.

**12.** At the small crossroads go straight on. (The road to your right leads past Home Farm and is an alternate route for return to Pinhoe, it emerges on Church Hill close to the parish church). The wooded area on your right at this point is the edge of a part of the former gardens and park of Poltimore House that are now in private ownership.

**13.** Continue ahead.

**Archaeology** - the dramatic high stone wall on your right, is the wall of the former kitchen gardens of Poltimore House. The gardens themselves, sadly, do not survive. These walls now enclose horse paddocks and a pig farm.

As you come into the village of Poltimore turn right at the junction. You will soon find Poltimore church on your right

**14.** Well done you have come three miles, more than half way to Broadclyst!

**Archaeology** St Mary's Church is mainly of late 15th century in date, although the base of the tower may be earlier. It underwent much restoration in the late 16th and 17th century and then again during the course of the 19th century. There are some fine chest tombs in the churchyard of probable 17<sup>th</sup> century date. Go past the church keeping it on your right. At the end of the churchyard you get fine view back in the direction you have come from, looking over the former kitchen gardens within their walls.

Also you will see a tunnel-like view along a majestic avenue of lime trees. This formerly was the private drive from Poltimore House to the parish church. There is no public access that way now. Poltimore house was a grand Tudor house, with an extensive deer park. It was expanded to form a great 18<sup>th</sup> century mansion and home to the Bamfylde family. It had extensive ornamental parkland and a succession of garden developments with planting of to some notable trees through the 19<sup>th</sup> century. It became a school and then hospital in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, falling into abandonment and badly damaged by fire in 1987. The house and its gardens are now under the care of Poltimore House Trust, and are sometimes open to the public. To learn more about this amazing and atmospheric place check out the website [Poltimore House – Help us bring this grade II\\* building back to life](#)

Leaving the churchyard you have choices to make.

---You could turn left and retrace your steps three miles to your start point in Pinhoe.

---Or: go on to Broadclyst (two miles), where facilities, and buses are available.

--- If you want to take a detour to Poltimore House to visit Branches Café or the gardens there, then check for opening and availability first, here: [BRANCHES CAFE – Poltimore House](#). That adds 0.6 miles to your route. Marked on the Map via A. and B.

## To Go On To Broadclyst

**15.** Cross the road from Poltimore Church, follow footpath sign and enter Hatchland road. Continue to bend at the end of Hatchland Road, and enter the footpath between hedges.

**16.** At the end of the footpath cross the drive with care (business traffic and trucks here) and go through the gap at the right of the gates ahead. Follow the concrete track up hill and cross the motorway bridge.

**17.** Go right in the concrete yard, to the narrow footpath gate in the corner. Follow the path, through a gate and cross the track. The path now crosses a large open field with views toward Broadclyst ahead. Beyond Broadclyst you can see Ashclyst forest on the skyline and Killerton house off to the left.

**18.** At the far side of the field go through a narrow gate, and descend into the floodplain of the river Clyst. If there have been heavy rains and the river has broken its banks you will NOT be able to get to Broadclyst and will have to retrace your steps. **DANGER** – Do NOT attempt to wade through flood waters

**19.** At the far side of the floodplain cross the footbridge and enter the lane. Ignore the lane going to the left (Unless you wish to go left to visit Clyston Mill, National Trust, or walk all the way to National Trust Killerton), but our route to Broadclyst Village is straight ahead and up the hill.

The track comes out at a metalled road. Turn left and go past the picturesque seventeenth century almshouses on your right. Where the road bends sharp right, leave it and enter the lane straight ahead.

Go along this lane, past Broadclyst House (which formerly was the rectory) on your left, towards Broadclyst Parish Church.

**20.** Enter the churchyard and follow the path to the right.

**Archaeology** Church of St John the Baptist. This fine church is mainly late 15<sup>th</sup> century in date, with a 16<sup>th</sup> Century tower. It was substantially restored in 1833-4 and again in 1882. The size and grandeur of this building compared to the other churches we have passed in Pinhoe and Poltimore well illustrates the importance and wealth of the parish of Broadclyst in the medieval era. Beyond the church is a fine medieval preaching cross with an octagonal base. In the far corner of the churchyard, visible in the boundary wall, are arches. These are the tops of the vaulted roof of an undercroft, or cellar, and are all that remains of the medieval Broadclyst Manor House which stood here adjacent to the church until the Tudor era. Near the church tower you can find the 19<sup>th</sup> Century memorial to the famous Exeter Veitch family of horticulturalists who introduced many new garden plants to England.

Leave the churchyard by the large gates and you will find yourselves at the centre of Broadclyst next to the historic Red Lion Inn.

**Well done you have reached your destination and have walked 5 miles!**

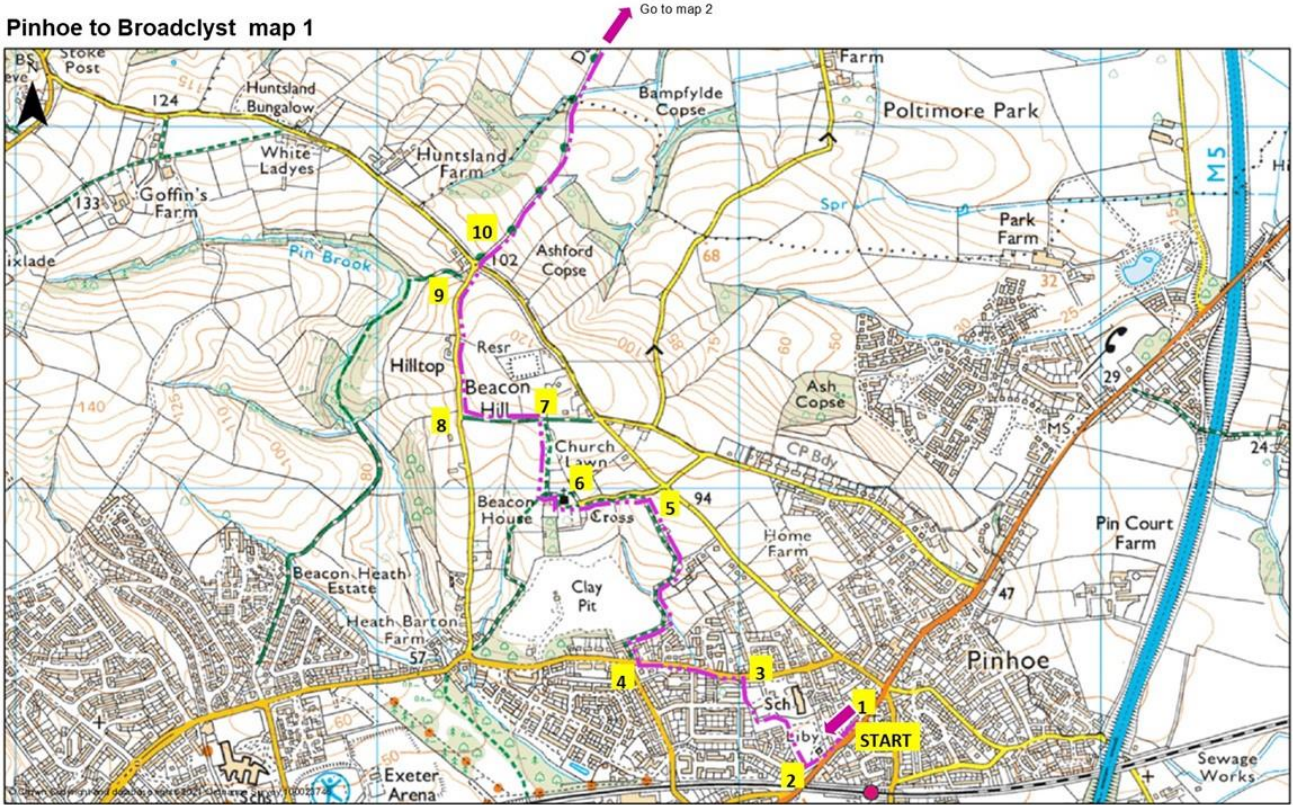
Enjoy some refreshment at the historic Red Lion Inn, or cross the B3181 to find the village shop and public toilets. For buses back to Pinhoe or to Exeter (The no.1 Service), the bus stop on the other side of the road from the Red Lion is the direction you need.

Or you can retrace your route for a walk total of just over 10 miles.

For news of other walks and events, why not become a Clyst Valley Friend and sign up for our e-mail newsletter?

[Become a Clyst Valley Friend | Clyst Valley Regional Park \(clystvalleypark.org.uk\)](http://clystvalleypark.org.uk)

Pinhoe to Broadclyst map 1



0 0.175 0.35 0.7 km

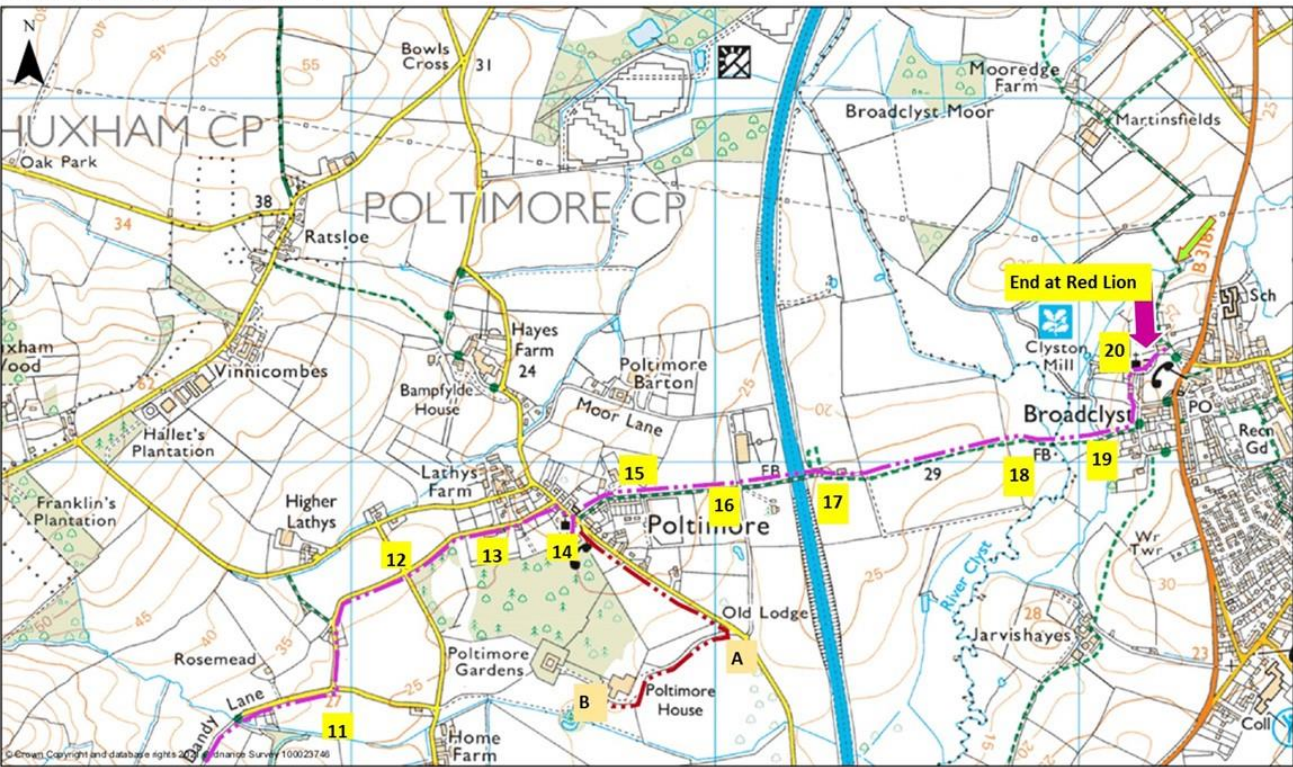
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1:12,652

Route of Walk

1 Point in text guide

Pinhoe to Broadclyst map 2



0 0.175 0.35 0.7 km

Map Tile: SX9697SE Full Reference: SX96814 97207

1:12,652

Route of Walk

Detour Route from Poltimore Church to House

11 Point in text guide

From Map 1