

Blackdown Hills

Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

6 Circular Walks in and around Hemyock

Walk 4

Madford valley and Dunkeswell Abbey ruins

A 6.5 km (4 mile) walk with lovely views of secluded Madford valley and a visit to the ruins of a Cistercian abbey.

From the car park next to the Baptist church, turn left along Forestreet to the village **pump**. Turn left here (High Street) and walk uphill for 0.5km to a lane on the left with a no through sign. Go along here for 200m, past **Mountshayne Farm**, and take the footpath on the right, which follows a muddy track to the top of the hill. Go through a gate on your left and follow the path along the edge of a hill for about 1km, crossing several stiles and keeping the hedge bank on your right. This is a lovely, level stretch of walking with views over the Madford valley. At the end of the path, you will come to two gates, close together, leading on to a lane. Go through both gates, turn left on the lane and walk downhill for 1km.

Take the first lane on your right (signposted Dunkeswell Abbey). As you come into the hamlet, just before crossing a stream, look through a gate to your right: the grass-covered embankments are the remains of the Abbey's fishponds. Go a little further and turn left at a T-junction, then follow the footpath towards the church and Abbey ruins. At the iron gates go left across the graveyard,

over a stile and into a field. (Before doing so though, do take a little time to look around the ruins and church. Inside the church is a very good information board about the Abbey and the Cistercian order of monks who lived there).

Follow the stream, then go over a bridge and through a gate. Follow the direction of the footpath arrows across two more fields to a bridge, then one more field to a lane. Turn left, and soon after, right to Madford Cross. Go left here, past a thatched barn with a post-box in the wall, and continue for 1km. About 100m past a bungalow on the left you will find two footpath signs on opposite sides of the lane. Take the left-hand path across a field with a ditch running through it, to a bridge hidden in the right hand corner of the field. Cross this and go straight ahead for 100m to the first gate on your left. Go through this gate and immediately through a second, then continue uphill to the top right corner of the field where there is a stile onto a lane. Turn right and return via **Mountshayne Farm** and High Street.



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Walk 4 map

