

Heavitree Boundary Walk

Introduction

The walk encompasses both rural and suburban environments, is of moderate difficulty, and over 14 miles in length; there is one long climb in the Stoke Hill area. Some sections can be very muddy in winter, with flooding possible in low-lying areas after prolonged heavy rain. Anyone wishing to attempt the walk will find a good street map useful. The Countryside Code should be adhered to at all times.

Relative to its length there are only a handful of known surviving boundary stones (see [Appendix 1](#)), even these tend to be clumped in sections. There is one long section void of stones: Marypole Head to Honiton Road. Some of the boundary stones are ancient and relate to Heavitree Parish, others are Victorian and relate to Heavitree Urban District. Doubtless there would have been a greater number of boundary stones in the past but these have been lost, at least for now.

There are a number of sections where detours from the original boundary are necessary due to private land, and the layout of buildings + roads that have been built since the boundary was instituted; these are subject to change. Other deviations from the boundary in the form of shortened, simplified sections have also been provided.

Maps of the Heavitree Parish Boundary overlain on early twentieth century and 2015 maps of Exeter are shown in [Appendices 2](#) and [3](#) respectively. For further information on the Heavitree Boundary, the origins of the walk, plus a shortened version, please see our website: www.heavitreelocalhistorysociety.co.uk.

The Walk

The circuit as described below proceeds in a clockwise direction, starting and ending at the junction of Fore Street, Heavitree and Polsloe Road, at Livery Dole, the ancient site of Devon's public executions.

For clarity the walk has been presented as a table; the left column contains information on the walk itself, the right column contains information on the line of the boundary as an aside.

Positions of the boundary stones are highlighted in **red**; deviations from the original boundary due to inaccessibility, etc in **blue**; deviations to simplify the walk in **green**.

Step	The walk	The boundary
1	Commence the walk at boundary stone 1 on the eastern corner of Fore Street, Heavitree and Polsloe Road. Head northwards along Polsloe Road to Pinhoe Road, pausing after about 140m by a zebra-crossing to view boundary stone 2 .	From Livery Dole the old Heavitree / St Sidwells boundary ran northwards along the centre of Polsloe Road (at one time called Workhouse Lane) which lies on the route of an ancient ridgeway from Stoke Hill to the River Exe.
2	Use the pedestrian crossing to cross into Mount Pleasant Road, and then continue northwards to the Stoke Hill roundabout. Pause on a traffic island to the north of the roundabout to view boundary stone 3 .	From the Polsloe Road / Pinhoe Road junction the boundary ran down the middle of Mount Pleasant Road to the Stoke Hill roundabout at the junction with Old Tiverton Road.
3	Walk up Rosebarn Lane to the junction with Pennsylvania Road. Pause to view boundary stone 4 , and catch your breath!	The boundary ran up the centre of Rosebarn Lane to its junction with Pennsylvania Road, aka Marypole Head.

Step	The walk	The boundary
4	<p><i>Continue along Pennsylvania Road until just after its junction with Stoke Valley Road.</i></p> <p>At a property named "Hilltop", turn right onto a signed bridleway. Keep left at the first track junction (Rolleston House) and continue to Stoke Hill Farm.</p>	<p>From here the boundary continued along Pennsylvania Road to the top of Wrefords Lane where it went north-westwards, dropping downhill across fields to Stoke Road and the River Exe, which it followed for about 60m and then turned eastwards through the woods back to Pennsylvania Road.</p> <p>The boundary continued in an easterly direction, skirting 'round the site of an Iron Age fort before reaching Stoke Hill Farm.</p>
5	<p>Follow the arrows clockwise through and around the farm buildings then go eastwards through two metal gates to a fenced bridlepath which continues for approximately 1200m to a road (Stoke Hill). At Stoke Hill turn right, taking great care of traffic, and after approximately 1000m ("Moongate") turn left 'round a metal gate into Mile Lane. This point can be identified by an adjacent 30mph sign and a radio mast which is approximately 20m back from the road.</p>	<p>After continuing eastwards to reach Stoke Hill the boundary followed the road south to Rixlade.</p>
6	<p><i>Continue down Mile Lane to Beacon Lane. [After approximately 500m you may wish to follow a more attractive route through Mincinglake Valley Park. Turn right through the kissing gate into the Park and bear left across the field. Aim for a metal cattle trough and at the adjacent kissing gate bear left back into Mile Lane. Continue down the Lane until it meets Beacon Lane.]</i></p> <p><i>Turn left past the Devon Yeoman public house and follow Beacon Lane & Beacon Heath to the Pinn Brook.</i></p>	<p>The boundary ran south-eastwards just after Rixlade Farm following field boundaries to Heath Barton.</p>
7	<p>Just before crossing the Pinn Brook, turn right onto a footpath which runs between two houses (Heath Barton and Heath Barton Lodge). Follow this path through Eastern Field, passing Exhibition Fields on the right. Cross the railway bridge, and at the end of Exhibition Way use the pedestrian crossing to cross Pinhoe Road.</p>	<p>The boundary followed the line of the Pinn Brook to the Pinhoe Road.</p>
8	<p><i>Turn left towards Pinhoe and at the Monkerton link-road use the pedestrian crossing to cross the link-road. A few metres along Pinhoe Road a gravelled footpath runs down the embankment. Follow this footpath through the hedge gaps and use the stile over the link-road fence.</i></p> <p><i>Turn left and at the next pedestrian crossing turn left again into Harts Lane. [There is a good pick-up point here if you only wish to complete part of the circuit.] At the end of Harts Lane, turn right down Pinn Lane, sticking to the original lane where possible, through Exeter Business Park, to the A30 Honiton Road. Pause here to view boundary stone 5.</i></p>	<p>The boundary then headed westwards along Pinhoe Road before heading back eastwards along Hospital Lane & Hollow Lane. It then headed south across fields to emerge on Honiton Road near Moor Lane.</p>

Step	The walk	The boundary
9	<p><i>Cross Honiton Road, turn right then left into Moor Lane, which had its origins as a turnpike road. Continue down Moor Lane until reaching Sidmouth Road. At the Sandygate roundabout follow the signs for Sidmouth under the M5 bridge.</i></p> <p>Just past the bus lay-by and the junction on the right to Topsham, bear left onto the medieval bridge at Clyst St Mary. Pause here to view boundary stone 6.</p>	<p>The boundary then ran westwards again along Honiton Road to the Gallows Cottages opposite Ringswell Avenue, then doubled back up Sidmouth Road, passing Middlemoor, and Sandygate, on to Clyst St Mary bridge.</p>
10	<p><i>Retrace your steps to the road junction for Topsham (Clyst Road), cross the main road and go down Clyst Road past the "Blue Ball Inn" until you reach the junction with Old Rydon Lane. Boundary stone 7 can be seen close to the finger post on the left.</i></p>	<p>The boundary then followed the line of the River Clyst southwards for a short distance before turning west to meet Clyst Road at the junction with Old Rydon Lane.</p>
11	<p>Continue along Old Rydon Lane until you reach the junction with Rydon Lane.</p> <p><i>Turn left at the junction and continue southwards to the Countess Wear roundabout. Cross Topsham Road and then cross Bridge Road via the footbridge.</i></p>	<p>The boundary ran down the middle of Old Rydon Lane, crossed what is now Rydon Lane, and near the rear boundary of the "College for Children with Little or No Sight". It then turned south, following the Northbrook to Topsham Road.</p>
12	<p><i>Continue in a southerly direction down Bridge Road and turn right into Countess Wear Road. After approximately 500m turn left into Mill Road, then at 25 Mill Road turn left into Mill Lane. Don't go down the footpath to the right, but cross the leat before following the signed footpath.</i></p> <p><i>Approximately 1000m along this footpath, at a "University Sports Field" notice, is a path at a right-angle to the leat. Use this path and cross the bridge over the River Exe.</i></p> <p>This apparent diversion is accurate as there were parts of both parish and the Heavitree Urban District on the west side of the river.</p>	<p>From here the boundary headed north-westwards along Topsham Road for a short while before turning south-eastwards down Millbrook Lane. Here the boundary crossed the River Exe.</p>
13	<p><i>Bear right but don't use the "kissing gate" rather continue along the west of the River Exe to Trews Weir suspension bridge.</i></p>	<p>The boundary then headed north-westwards for a short distance, then came back across the River Exe to Topsham Road to the south-east of County Hall.</p>
14	<p><i>Cross the bridge and at Belle Isle Lodge turn left up the hill to Topsham Road.</i></p> <p>Cross Topsham Road using the crossing, then turn left and right into Matford Lane. Continue northwards to the junction with Wonford Road.</p>	<p>After following Topsham Road north-westwards for a short while the boundary headed north-eastwards up Matford Lane to Wonford Road.</p>
15	<p><i>Turn left at Wonford Road and then right into Marlborough Road, rejoining the boundary at Magdalen Road.</i></p> <p>Turn left at Magdalen Road, crossing over at College Avenue to view boundary stone 8.</p>	<p>The boundary went eastwards from this point along Wonford Road, turned into the grounds of Exeter School and threaded its way through to Magdalen Road, then headed westwards again to College Avenue.</p>

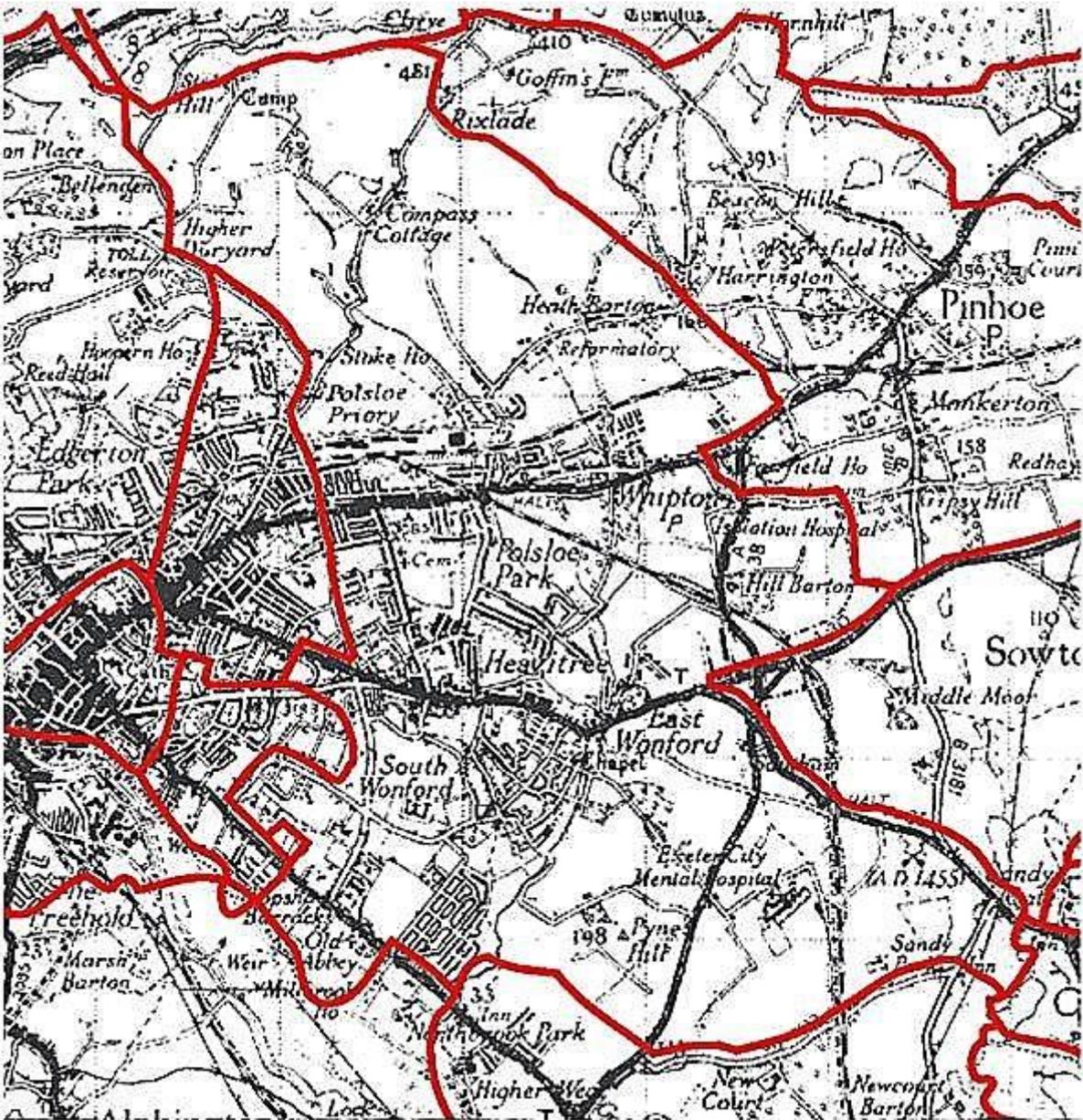
Step	<i>The walk</i>	<i>The boundary</i>
16	<i>Turn eastwards back along Magdalen Road, turning left into Baring Crescent and left again into Heavitree Road. Continue along Heavitree Road until you reach St Luke's College. Boundary stone 9 can be viewed in front of a staff house just prior to the College.</i>	The boundary then went through what is now part of St Luke's College to Heavitree Road.
17	To complete the circuit walk back eastwards along Heavitree Road to the junction with Polsloe Road.	The boundary then ran up the centre of Heavitree Road to Livery Dole.

Appendices:

Appendix 1: Known boundary stones of Heavitree Parish / Urban District

Stone	Location	Grid Reference	Period	Type	Details
	Back of pavement on eastern corner of Fore Street / Polsloe Road	SX 93439 92500	Ancient	Prismatic	Inscribed "Heavitree St Sidwells"
	Against wall by zebra crossing on eastern side of Polsloe Road.	SX 93385 92672	1897?		Inscribed "H E" (Heavitree Exeter). Buried for many years, its top forming part of the kerb. Spotted in 2002 & resurrected.
	On triangular traffic island to north of Stoke Hill roundabout	SX 93089 93876	Ancient	Flat stone	Inscribed "Heavitree P / St Sidwells P"
	Facing east in vegetation-covered wall at Marypole Head - opposite middle of 3 garages next to 102 Rosebarn Lane	SX 92608 94681	Ancient		Inscribed "St Sidwells Manor Bounds". A turnpike toll-house stood near this ancient stone until 1912.
	Northern side of Honiton Road next to pedestrian crossing close to Pinn Lane	SX 96533 93021	1897		Inscribed "H P". Rediscovered during road works in 2003
	On north wall of Clyst St Mary bridge	SX 97084 91110		Prismatic	Practically illegible
	By fingerpost at junction of Clyst Road & Old Rydon Lane	SX 96712 90856	1897?	Prismatic	Practically illegible
	Junction of Magdalen Road & College Avenue	SX 92966 92382	1897		Inscribed "H P". For many years this site was the location of the "Magdalen Gallows".
	In front of staff house of St Luke's College, Heavitree Road	SX 93106 92626	1897		Inscribed "H P", with the numerals "18"

Appendix 2: Map showing Heavitree Parish Boundary overlain on an early 20th century map of Exeter



Appendix 3: Map showing Heavitree Parish Boundary overlain on the 2015 map of Exeter

