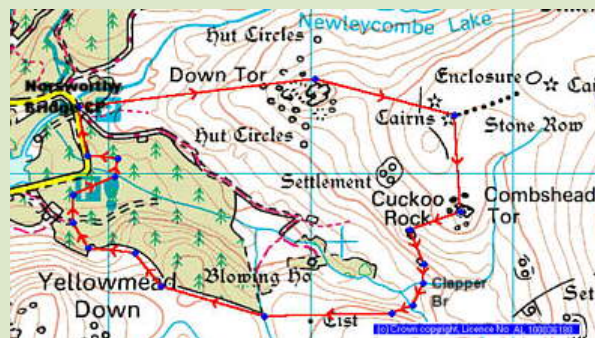


DOWN TOR , COMBESHEAD TOR CUCKOO ROCK AND ARBORETUM
START POINT: NORWORTHY BRIDGE GRID REF: 567694
DISTANCE: 4.5 MILES

This walk is a lovely walk of about 4.5 miles to the East of Burrator and it ideal for people looking for some good exercise in a limited time. You can expect to take around 2 hrs for this walk although on a good day, it may take longer though since you are bound to want to stop to enjoy the marvellous views this walk gives.

Three of us walked this route on 23rd January 03 and what a glorious day it was. As some of the pictures show we had clear blue skies for the whole of the walk. The wind was also light and it made for perfect conditions for a short Dartmoor walk.



The route outline is given above and as ever it should be looked at in conjunction with a 1:25000 map such as the OS leisure map no 29 of Dartmoor.



The walk can easily be extended with a visit up to Eylesbarrow for those with more time on their hands than we had.

Norsworthy Bridge looked very tranquil in the warm afternoon winter sunshine so although we were not crossing it I took the opportunity for a quick picture of it.

We set off from Norsworthy CP at about 12.45 PM and started the first uphill walk from the CP towards Down Tor, about 250 ft higher than the CP and 0.75 miles east.

When heading up to this large imposing Tor make sure the stream running down from Newleycombe Lake is on your left hand side. If it is on your right then you are on the wrong side of the valley to Down Tor.

We kept close to the brook for the first few hundred yards before leaving the side of the brook and heading across to pick up a well defined track leading up to Down tor.



On the way up we passed a Tor, not named on the 1:25000 route, I wonder why not, it was larger than many that are .



Down Tor grew ever larger as we approached it and although we didn't need to, we clambered up to the top of the Tor to enjoy the majestic views back over Burrator, looking very inviting in the bright sunshine.

After a few minutes enjoying the views from the top of the Tor, we dropped down from the Tor and then continued uphill again still heading east, looking for a stone circle and stone row about 0.5 miles further into the moor.

As we walked across the visibility was excellent and we could see the outline of Crazy Well pool across the valley.

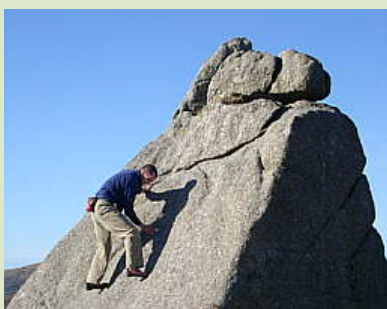
We made quick progress across this section of open moorland and soon we are standing by the lovely old stone circle with the stone row leading up to it.

This is an excellent example of the many circles and stone rows there are up on the moor.



From the stone circle, we headed almost due south for the next Tor en route, Combeshead Tor only a third of a mile away.

From here there are good views South East across the valley and up to Eylesbarrow, high above us.



A well known beauty spot, west of the Tor is Cuckoo Rock, does it look like the head of a bird, a little bit, given a little poetic visual licence.

As we admired the rock and enjoyed a cup of coffee, a climber arrived and was soon at the top of this small rock.

It seemed a fair way to come just to climb this relatively small rock, perhaps he was looking to climb all the Tors and rocks in the area.

Due south of us was a lovely quiet valley with Narrator Brook running down through it.



This a very sheltered spot and in the afternoon sunshine it felt like spring as we made our way south east down from Cuckoo Rock to a derelict farm in the valley.

Dave and Joan took a slight detour to look at an old potato cave a hundred yards uphill from the derelict farm.



I spent the time trying to locate a footbridge over the stream, clearly marked as such on the 1:25000 map. It turned out to be an old clapper bridge.

We were soon back together again and crossing the old bridge over the brook.

Slightly uphill again and then we dropped down to cross another tumbling stream. This was followed by a steep short climb up the other side

of the valley to meet a track running WSW.

It might have been easier to follow the second brook further uphill before crossing it and thereby avoiding the short steep climb out of the valley.

As we made our way up to the top of the hillside, we heard the sound of dogs barking.

It turned out to be the local hunt on the Cuckoo Rock side of the valley. There were lots of dogs but not too much action was taking place.

I wonder how the dogs are trained to ignore the sheep and other livestock which live there.

After a minute or two watching to see if a fox had been found we were on our way again.



About a half a mile away, across reasonably level ground, we could see the trees of a plantation, shown on the 1:25000 map as RoughTor plantation.

We headed for the most southerly point of the plantation and crossed over a small brook.

A short uphill section followed and high above us to the West we could see the very large Sheeps Tor.

I had visited that Tor twice in the last couple of months but not today, we were to keep to the north



of the Tor as we followed the edge of the plantation for a half a mile, keeping to the edge of Yellowmead Down

After the slight uphill section over Yellowmead Down, we started our descent again, still walking along by the edge of the plantation, keeping to the side of the dry stone boundary wall enclosing the plantation.

We continued to descend and ahead and below us we could see a gate with a roughish track which we followed north west down towards a wooded area, now known as the Arboretum.



We climbed over a stile into this area where there are many intertwining paths and we followed a path to another stile and north west towards a car park which came into view soon.

Many of the paths in the Arboretum have been established to give easy access to disabled visitors and the bridges over the brooks are a lot better than many we find on the moor. To avoid a couple of

hundred yards of road walking we put a slight loop in, as the route depicted clearly shows and exited the Arboretum rather closer to the Norsworthy Bridge CP than the first exit.

Anyone who has used the gated entrance/exit to the Arboretum will know of the strange gated system put there by Dartmoor National Parks which has caused so many walkers to scratch their heads in wonderment. The double levered gates are there to facilitate wheelchair access, although how wheelchair bound individuals can negotiate it is rather difficult to fathom.



No wonder I have seen no wheelchairs in the Arboretum in all the times I've walked through it.

The final couple of hundred yards of road walking can easily be avoided by keeping to the grassy verges for the short final section back to the car park.

It had been an excellent short walk and the three of us enjoyed the afternoon out in the sun. I'll be offering this walk as one of the Ramblers Thursday evening walks in June 03.

I'm looking forward to it already.