

GUTTER TOR TO GRANTSPOT CIRCULAR MOORLAND WALK

START POINT GRID REF: 578674

This walk of moorland took place on 17th November 99 and was led by Geoff Thomas. The start point for the Walk was from the car park below Gutter Tor and at 10am, there were 15 ramblers, wet weather gear on, and ready for the start of the walk.

We left the car park heading south east, crossed a small ford and then passed a copse with a scout hut in it to our right. We followed a rough path uphill for about a mile on a bearing of 065 degrees until we reached the mine workings of Eylesbarrow at the top. We took the right hand path at this point and continued down past more mine workings and then to the first river crossing of many during the day, Plym Ford.



The crossing at Plym Ford brought us in contact with the Abbots Way route for a very short distance.

Having made it over the ford, we stopped for morning coffee before continuing our ascent up on a bearing of 135 degrees over moderate moorland and on up to Great Gnat's Head.

This point is marked by a pile of small stones and from here there are very good views back across the moor to Plymouth and the sea in the distance.

Leaving Great Gnat's Head we walked on a compass bearing of 118 degrees across moderately marshy, and subsequently very wet, thick moorland grass and tussocks.



We continued in this vein for about a mile, stumbling and squelching our way across the moor until we reached the next point of reference, GrantsPot. We must have passed very close to Duckspool, the site of one of the first of the Dartmoor letter boxes, Crossing's Memorial, without any apparent visual clue of it's presence.



Geoff had said that GrantsPot was difficult to find since it was only a little hole in the ground. He was right. We found our way to a valley with a stream called Blacklane Brook running through it and then made our way along the

	west side until we found the indentation in the ground.
 GrantsPot is a small cave, one of the few natural ones on Dartmoor and we stopped for a while, to look at the cave and to encourage one member of the party to enter the cave to get the letterbox stamp which we knew was there. Norman Chynoweth eventually volunteered and squeezed into the cave to retrieve the letterbox stamp. He can be seen emerging from the narrow cave entrance.	Geoff used the stamp to mark his map and book at the appropriate point. Normally ramblers don't engage in letterboxing on Dartmoor, however having got this far it was nice to record the fact in some way. 
We crossed the small stream at the valley bottom and went up stream for a short distance until we found another cave called Philpott's Cave. Geoff, our walks leader, inspected the cave and surrounds for a lunch break location out of the wind.  This cave was above ground, formed by suitably positioned granite slabs. At this point, we stopped and tucked in behind rocks to avoid the northerly breeze and have our lunch.	 After lunch, we made our way back the valley over the stream again, past GrantsPot and then on over moderate moorland for less than a half mile on 260 degrees until we reached Erme Pits. It is interesting to note that the OS 1:25000 map of Dartmoor shows neither GrantsPot nor Philpott's cave, two unusual features. I wonder why?
Erme Pitts is the site of the yet more Dartmoor mining and from the number of rocks strewn around and the hillocks which we crossed over, it must a been a very big mining site in its day. Some of the hillocks we climbed were quite steep and after the traverse across this old mine working we were once again on rough moorland and climbing.	Back on the rough moorland again, we were soon on a compass bearing of 250 degrees, heading for yet another landmark, one of many such landmarks one finds on Dartmoor. This time, it was the site of a grave called Grime's Grave. No-one was aware of the history of the grave, Grant in his reference work on Dartmoor



suggests it was a Kistvaen. We all gathered around the site of the grave to have a look at the stone at the bottom, there were even bones in it, but not Mr Grimes' we were assured.



Having inspected the grave, we descended the eastern side of the valley carrying Langcombe Brook and were on our way back on a bearing of approx 320 degrees. After a mile or so, we forded yet another stream in the vicinity of the DeadMan's Bottom, a relatively easy crossing with no wet feet.

We continued to make our way back along the valley until we came to yet another river crossing, shown on the OS map as Plym Steps.

Although the river at this point was rather deeper than Geoff had envisaged, we all managed to cross this, some got wet feet for their efforts, me included. Shortly afterwards in a sheltered spot near the river, we stopped for afternoon coffee.



As can be seen, Eric revelled in his photo opportunity as he crossed the stream.



At this point we were within about 1.5 miles of the car park. We continued on a bearing of 270 degrees but deviated from the planned route slightly, to look at the old large stones near Didsworthy Warren area.

We negotiated some marshy land at DrizzleCombe without too much difficulty and had good views of Gutter Tor about a half a mile south. Soon the car park was in sight.



We walked downhill passing a small copse with a scout building in it, navigated yet another

	stream with its marshy area and were back at the car park at just before 3 pm.
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We had been lucky with the weather, as the forecast had been for a strong north-easterly breeze, with many heavy showers. In reality we had some sharp showers, but the breeze was not as strong as the forecast had predicted.

Those with pedometers confirmed that we had walked about 8.5 miles. It had been yet another good, interesting walk, thanks to Geoff for his excellent map reading the navigation across the rough terrain had been excellent.

Even now, after two years or more, of walks with Plymouth Ramblers, I am still meeting areas that I have never walked before. Long may it continue.