

LANGAGE TO HEMERDON VIA VENTON AND LUTTON START POINT GRID REF: 564 560

This walk of an area just to the east of Plympton was led on 20th February 2000 by George Bragg. It was shown on the programme as a moderate walk of fields, lanes and moorland and in distance some 7 to 8 miles.

The proximity to Plymouth and the bright if cool morning was more than enough to bring out many ramblers who have not walked with the group for months as well as the regular 25 or so. 35 of us met at Languge Industrial Estate for a 10.30 AM start.



The map above illustrates in outline form the route taken. This should be used in conjunction with a 1:25000 ordnance survey map of the area such as the outdoor leisure map 20 of South Devon. This map used together with the description below and the outline above should give a clear picture of the actual route followed.

We left Eagle Road on the estate at 10.30 AM and made our way up to the road junction and then turned right and followed the road east through the estate. I was amazed at just how large the estate was and the large number of small factories and other commercial units which had set up there.



After a couple of hundred yards along the road at the end of the estate we turned left and were on a grass path for the first time.

We skirted the end of the estate and crossed the first of many stiles and found ourselves in an open field. Although no path was obvious, we crossed the field bearing 030 degrees and heading down a slight slope until we came across a most unusual triple stile.



This triple stile certainly slowed the 35 strong group down but after a few minutes we had regrouped and we continued down through another field still on 030 degrees.

To our left and below us we could clearly see the main railway line to Plymouth and Cornwall. Obviously this walk is a must for train spotters.



Many trains rushed by us during the walk since for the next mile or so the path took us right beside the main line. We soon crossed our fifth stile and over a road into another field still beside the railway line.

It was this point that we were to return to some four hours later.

A short distance on and we were picking our way gingerly through a very wet low lying section of land or should I say swampland.



There were signs that the footpath through this section had been recently cleared. It transpired that Glynn, one of the group, had come down in the last month and had removed most of the major obstructions.

The next hurdle was a small stream with no obvious means of crossing it only by grabbing hold of a wire fence at the end and carefully standing on a log.



Those who had crossed this spot years ago could well remember a small bridge, that had long gone and there was practically no sign of there ever have been a bridge at the point.

Having negotiated the hazards of the mini swamp and stream we soon found a suitable point to stop for morning coffee. We then headed across more fields now on a bearing of 120 degrees across a couple more stiles up towards the village of Venton.



We followed the road through the village and beyond until we saw another fingerpost pointing us across a small field containing horses on 030 degrees again.

As we made our way down across the field we could see horses being trained in the far corner, but before reaching that point we had another little hurdle, a stile which took us over a fence, apparently electrified on both sides.

After a quarter mile of road walking we turned right and followed the path north through woodland, in the distance we could see Slade viaduct. Emerging from the woodland we passed under the viaduct and



It was almost impossible to get over the stile without touching the electrified fence and the horses arrived to join in the fun of watching us trying to avoid the wire.

When we got to the bottom corner, the horsey people there advised us that the power to the fence was off, pity we didn't know that a few minutes before.

noticed that there were in fact two viaducts there.



The old one apparently had been a narrow gauge line and couldn't be widened, hence the newer model and the removal of the links between the old viaduct supports.

We were now on the Slade Estate and soon we could see Slade House up and to the left.



We passed by an old spring and turned right onto the drive leading to the estate.

We followed the drive away from the house as it swung left parallel to a small stream.



At the point where the path met the next road by a bridge we stopped for lunch.

After lunch we gathered on the narrow lane and turned left and walked on it for a hundred yards or so.

The footpath sign pointing to our right, led us across more fields now heading north and a half a mile on we were entering the village of Lutton.

We climbed up a steep stony bank and we were on the edge of Hermerdon Moor. We continued to walk up and across the moor for at least a mile now on 250 degrees. As we walked we came close to the clay works but we couldn't see the huge hole just over the bank.



We walked past a chapel and turned sharp right for the only real climb of the day up the road through the village. The road rose steeply for a few hundred yards and before long we were on a bridle path leading to moorland.



In the distance we could see the Sparkwell communications mast and at the top of the hill, we turned left south off the moor and made our way towards that mast though an incredibly wet and muddy stretch. It was officially classified as a bridleway, a river of mud more like.

We gave up any attempts to avoid the mud and water and ploughed our way on until we were level with the Sparkwell mast.

We then followed the road steeply downhill due south for about a mile and a half, crossing the main 'B' road from Sparkwell to Plympton and continued down still south until we crossed the main line railway bridge. We were back at the point we had crossed a few hours earlier.

We turned right over one of the earlier traversed stiles, had a quick coffee stop and then retraced our steps across the fields over a few more stiles, including the triple and just over a mile later of gentle uphill walking we were back again at Langage Industrial Estate.

One of the walkers had been counting the number of stiles crossed and had counted 23 in all. With 35 in the group and that number of stiles it was little wonder that it was gone 3.30 when we arrived back at the Estate. Although it was only an 8 mile walk, it had taken us 5 hours.

Hardly record breaking progress but it was a walk with variety, industrial estates, fields, a couple of villages, plenty of mud, woodland and moorland fringe. With a smaller group the walk would have been much faster, but we had been out in the fresh air and it hadn't rained. Thanks George for keeping the group together with such a variation of terrain and stiles.