

LONG ASH TO DOUBLE WATER FIGURE OF EIGHT WALK START POINT GRID REF: 496 694

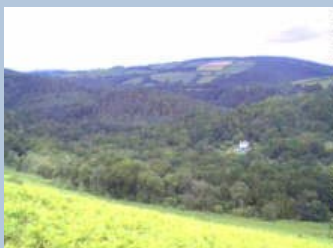
Yelverton down always proves to be a popular venue for the Plymouth Ramblers and the Walkham Valley provides a good source of walks. The Sunday walk on 26th Jun 00 was led by Des Deveney and attracted approaching 30 walkers despite an alternative walk being on offer on the day.

The weather conditions were good for walking with lots of sun, but not too hot and very little wind.

The figure of 8 walk, see below for the map, of 7 to 8 miles was graded as moderate because of 3 uphill sections during the walk, two of which were quite long and relatively steep.



An outline of the route taken is shown above. To best appreciate the route the outline should be viewed in conjunction with a suitable 1:25000 map of the area. The area walked sits just on the junction of two such maps and you are referred to the ordnance survey map of Dartmoor Leisure map no 28 and the map of the Lower Tamar Valley the ??? map.



Just after 10.30 AM we left the car park at Long Ash and made our way north for a hundred yards before we turned west and followed the contours along the top of the Walkham Valley.

We descended slightly and made our way through a copse before emerging out and onto moorland grassy down and gorse again.

There were excellent views looking down and ahead of us to the heavily wooded area of the Walkham valley and further ahead to where the Tavy and the Walkham merge.

After a few hundred yards along the down we turned more south west and walked uphill to reach the top of the valley.

This was the first of three such uphill sections that our leader had promised us during the course of the day.



As it turned out it was the first of three uphill sections and the easiest of the three.

After a few hundred yards we were at the top of the valley and as we rounded a corner we could see the one and only Tor that we would be visiting on the walk.



We approached Berra Tor and stopped by rocks for our morning break.

After the short break we were on our way again commencing our descent down to the valley below and to the River Tavy for since at the point the two rivers the Walkham and the Tavy meet, the two rivers take the name of the larger one which flows down from the

moors and through Tavistock, five to six miles north.

We soon saw the steep path which led us down to the valley below and soon we were leave the rough moorland and entering the wooded valley.

After a descent of approximately half a mile north west we emerged to the river below and to a very tranquil scene.

At this point the river widens out into a large almost pool like area and there were a couple throwing a length of wood into the 'pool' for their dog to dive in after and retrieve.



The two rivers are quite fast flowing for most of the journey and to see such a calm area of water indicated a good width and depth of water.

No doubt visitors would also enjoy a dip in the water on a good day. For me, despite the sun it was still a little too early in the season to find out.

We were right by the side of the river at this point and we made our way upstream along a narrow track.

To our right was clear evidence in the shape of a spoil tip.

Arsenic must have been mined here since after getting on for a hundred years on there was still no significant growth on the spoil heap.

As we turned a corner we could see ahead of us Double Waters where the Walkham and the Tavy meet.



There is a sturdy wooden bridge over the Walkham but no bridge over the Tavy. The first bridge upstream along the Tavy is at Tavistock and 3 miles downstream it is Denham Bridge.

Apparently there used to be a metal bridge over the Tavy just upstream of the junction but this has long since disappeared.

The next phase of the walk was a one mile section up the Walkham with the river on our right.



To get to this section we had to make our way through a cutting in the rock and only then pick up the track along the side of the Walkham.

From time to time the track moved further inland and we lost sight of the river.

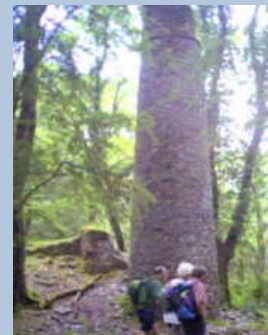
Since we were walking upstream we were of necessity walking uphill, not steeply but steadily nevertheless.

Although it was dry enough on the day and for a few days before there was some mud to contend with at this low point of the Walkham Valley and at times we had to pick our way carefully along the path.

We continued upstream in this manner following the winding track and at one point walked by a very well preserved old mine chimney on our left.

Once again the old chimney was providing solid evidence of the mining in the area.

At it's peak 150 years earlier the rivers Tavy and Tamar were some of the most industrialised mining areas in the whole country employing tens of thousands of men.



To see this area now with its silence and tranquility who could believe what is once was.

Had we continued along the river we would have ended up at Grenofen bridge but our route took us north and then just west of north as we climbed up a steep little hill and away from the river below.

The footpath through the woods swung back almost on itself and headed almost due south as we continued to climb up and through the trees towards the moorland down above. As we reached the edge of the wood we turned west north west and were soon up on West Down but not for long.



We soon started descending again down first through the thick bracken and then on down through woods

towards the River Tavy this time for a short walk downstream again toward the confluence of the two rivers.

Time for lunch first as it was now 1.15 PM and the troops were showing obvious signs of a need for food. We shared our food with the midges and flies and it was obviously the season for the midges to be out in force.

After a 30 minute lunch break we continued downstream to the bridge and recrossed it again to the other side of the Walkham.

Since we were right down by the side of the Walkham valley once more and Long Ash was at the top on the moors it followed that we would be faced with a steepish climb up out of the valley. And so it proved to be, we made our way steadily uphill, now heading due east and climbing.



This was perhaps the longest uphill section of the day. With a mile of solid uphill ahead, the group got nicely strung out during the climb. The track left the trees and became a well defined path uphill stringing uphill for as far as we could see and then some more.

Eventually we were on moorland down once again and on a flat section, less than a half a mile from Long Ash Car Park and our cars.



Des, our leader judging the needs of the group to a nicety decided that after a long climb up a break for liquid intake was in order.

15 minutes later and we were on our way still heading east and on relatively level ground until the car park to our right once again.

We arrived back at the cars at just gone 3 PM having enjoyed a good 7 to 8 mile walk and having spend four and a half hours outside in the sun and fresh air.

Thanks were given to Des for his leadership on the day and we were on our way back for the short hop to Plymouth, about 7 miles south.