

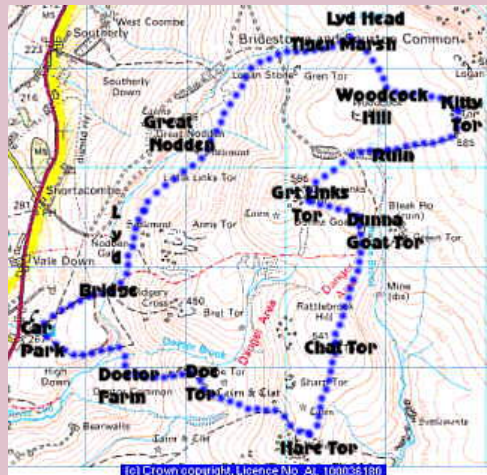
**START POINT: CAR PARK ABOVE DARTMOOR INN, LYDFORD GRID  
REF 524 854**

Fran Allen, who led the walk, explained how there were several Tors, hills and other areas on Dartmoor that carried animals names, or close approximations to them and that the Animal Crackers walk was a walk on the North Moor visiting a number of these points of interest.

Fran also pointed out that there is also an animal crackers walk on the southern half of the moor.

The recce and the actual walk certainly showed the facets of Dartmoors weather vagaries. On the recce the weather had clamped in and if I recall the walk was done in thick fog and very poor visibility where navigation was by GPS.

On the day of the walk itself, the 23rd June 02, the weather was rather more summer like, with long sunny spells, quite warm and incredibly good visibility.



An outline of the 12 mile route taken by Fran is given above and on it you can clearly (hopefully) see all the animals (and bird for good measure) locations visited.

This outline should of course be followed and linked with a much better scale map of Dartmoor such as the 1:25000 ordnance survey leisure map no 28 of Dartmoor. Even that map doesn't show every point visited. Can you spot which of the animal locations visited isn't on that map??

The answer will be given in the text which follows in case you can't work it out.



To get to the start point for this walk, drive on the A386 from Tavistock until Lydford and just beyond the Dartmoor Inn turn right, up a lane for two hundred yards or so , through a gate and into the large car park.

On the day of the walk a dozen of Ramblers gathered together, ready to enjoy this Animal Crackers walk.

The walk began with the customary in briefing on the route we would be taking and soon we were heading off along a track heading South East and then veering East as you walked down along an easy track towards the first crossing of the river Lyd.

The path ran through a very pretty valley with good views up towards Widgery Cross high above us on the open moor. There were several large stones in the river to stand on which made the river crossing a relatively easy matter.



Once across we continued East climbing up the other side of the Valley for 200 yards or so. We then it turned to the right and followed the contours around, heading for the enclosed land known as DoeTor Farm.

To reach this enclosed land we had to cross DoeTor Brook and luckily there was a foot bridge over the brook, leading to a gate into the land.



We could see our first Tor above us due East and we searched for a way through this small parcel of enclosed land.

We soon found a second gate at the higher side of the land arched by trees and once through that gate we were soon climbing steadily up to Doe Tor.

It was quite steep in places and about 400 yards of strenuous uphill work followed as we made our way up to the Tor.

So the first of the animal locations we visited was Doe Tor.

After a break to regain our breath by the side of the Tor we were on our way again heading up for a height gain of 120 metres to a Tor, clearly visible high above us, getting on for one mile away to the South East the large outcrop is called Hare Tor.



This Tor is a very impressive when viewed from a distance and this first section from the car park to Hare Tor was easily the most strenuous section of the whole walk.



We had climbed from an elevation of 275 metres at the car park up to Hare Tor at a height of 531 metres. It certainly had served to warm us up.

After such a long climb, the break for morning coffee at Hare Tor was very welcome and also gave us the time to admire the views all around us. Hare Tor was the most southerly point on the

Animal Crackers route.

When we left Hare Tor we headed due North for a little under a mile to reach a small of crop of rocks, this one called Chat Tor.

Chat is the French for cat and at this Chat Tor we had reached the third animal location on the walk.

We mentioned at the start that some of the Tors would involve some poetic licence.

Take care when leaving Hare Tor not to head for the largest Tor ahead, that of Sharp Tor since Chat Tor is 1/3rd of a mile to the east of its much larger cousin.



Compared with the steep climbs that we had experienced to start with, the gentle ascent we were now making was almost like walking on level ground in comparison.



We continued North, avoiding small bogs en route and soon we reached Lower DunnaGoat Tor.

There are two Tors in fact with similar names and we continued on to Higher DunnaGoat Tor. On the OS 1:25000 map both Tors are shown so we

had visited both to see a pair of Goats.

We were now well on our way having visited 4 animals locations on the walk so far.

We turned north-west and made our way across quite wet ground towards the highest point on the walk.

This is the majestic outcrop of rocks that constitutes Great Links Tor. By a suitable play on words Links can be changed to Lynx and hey presto, yet another animal location.

From this high Tor and range of rocks there are tremendous views all round and it was here that Fran had planned our lunch break.



After the 30 minutes most welcome break we set off on the walk again.



We headed off on a bearing of roughly 030 degrees until we intercepted the route of an old tramway which we then followed due east as it descended through cuttings and on down through some very boggy ground on either side.

A look at the map reveals that the tramway rises up from off the moor at the Nodden Gate area and that there are quite a few such tramways in this

part of the moor.

The rough track terminated near some old ruined buildings, obviously of some great mining or peat cutting significance.

We picked our way through these building, avoiding wet areas and made our way through some rough Peat areas.

We were on a bearing of about 070 to 080 degrees, looking for the track which would take us up to the next Animal location that of Kitty Tor. This section is quite difficult to cross.



For two or three hundred yards, we had to take great care to avoid sinking into the soft peaty bog that was all around us.

We could see a sort of track some distance on and eventually managed to reach it and then the firmer ground made the going much easier and the simple track was easy to follow as we climbed gently upwards on a bearing of 080 degrees to just south of Kitty Tor.



To reach Kitty Tor we turned due North and made our way up to the small rocky outcrop of the flagpost on top.

From this point we could see right across to the highest points on the whole of Dartmoor, these were called Yes Tor and High Willhays.

What we could not see was that to reach these very high points would have meant crossing a very steep sided valley called the West Okement valley, a far from easy proposition.

Not far away from Kitty Tor there were two small army wooden huts, doubtless associated with the edge of the army firing range we were now on.



Kitty Tor was the eastern extremity of the route and we were now turning away from the highest points and on our way back, just two more animals to visit on the way.

The map showed a track heading off away from Kitty Tor.



We soon found what we took to be that track initially North West and then slightly more westerly as we headed up to Woodcock Hill, not an animal but in this case a bird.

The track soon vanished and we could see tell tale signs of cotton grass all round us.

We skirted the Eastern side of Woodcock Hill and very wet it was in places, no surprise there, the cotton grass told us it would be.

The next and final animal location to visit on the walk was that off Tiger Marsh, not shown on the Ordnance Survey map.

This Marsh is on the southern side of the river Lyd and extends for a few hundred yards down from the head waters of the Lyd towards the tramway.



From Woodcock Hill we headed North in the general direction of just south of Lyd Head before swinging West and following the side of the Marsh down for half a mile.

Fran indicated that she had planned to take the easier route to have headed North West passing close to Gren Tor and then to pick up the side of the Marsh further down the river



Never let the boy navigators get too far ahead !!!  
But we had seen rather more of the marsh than planned and hadn't ended up in it.

We had now visited all the animals and one bird locations on this walk and we were at the Northern most points of the walk once we had got to Tiger Marsh.

On the way back we had some magnificent views of the moorland fringe and the fields, farms and villages way below us.

We crossed over the same tramway we had crossed on our way to Kitty Tor about a mile further along it though and commenced our descent from the moor, initially following the southern side of the river Lyd as it descended steeply below the tramway.

After an initial steepish descent, we gradually bore away more due south, maintaining the contours and descending much more gradually than we would have done had we followed the path of the river.

Off to our right, we could see the strange shape of the large hill known as Great Nodden, a very different rounded shaped hill to all the other rocky out crops we had been to on the walk.



There was another brook to cross on the way back and it has to be said that the leader managed to put a foot in the water on the way across. As Fran explained she was just testing her waterproof socks.

Once across this brook we had about two miles of easy walking to go to get back to the car park.

There were a multitude of paths we could take, all of them easy, across generally short cropped grass

and a real pleasure to walk-on after the tussocks we had met in the Kitty Tor to Tiger Marsh area.

About a mile south of Great Nodden we could see a gate and path leading off the moor which we knew led down to the Fox and Hounds pub, a mile north along the A386 from the Dartmoor Inn.

It would have been a nice attraction to visit given the time, and two more animals if any justification was needed.

However time was against us and being hardened walkers and not only being 'out for the beer/ wine' we kept on the planned route.

We continued on South across the gently sloping downs until we swept down to an easy crossing point over the Lyd, where we have the choice of stepping stones or a footbridge over the river.



Many families come here to relax and to enjoy the pools by the edge of the river in the summer.



We crossed the river and followed the track up an incline and then down again heading south-west

until we came into the final gate which led us back directly to the car park we have left some 5 hours previously.

It had been an excellent 12 mile walk and the visibility and weather had been marvellous. We were able to see for miles and miles and I reflected back on how this compared with the day a few of us had walked in thick fog in a vain attempt to recce the walk.

We thanked Fran for her efforts in putting this walk-on, particularly as she had a knee problem. We were soon in our cars, ready for the 25 mile drive back to Plymouth.

The animals and birds we had visited were Doe , Hare, Cat, Goat, Lynx , Kitty, all Tors and finally Woodcock Hill and finally the Tiger Marsh. We must have been animal crackers not to have ended up in the Fox and Hounds at the end though!!!