

MARY TAVY TO STEPHEN'S GRAVE, WHITE TOR VIA PETER TAVY 1st SEP 99

GRID REFERENCE: 711 394

This walk was organised by intrepid Jack Sycamore and he had estimated it to be about 8 to 9 miles. This was the first Wednesday walk I had been on and there were a few faces new to me when we gathered at 9.15 AM at Tesco's Car Park, Roborough. It was a glorious day, warm, in the 20s even up on moors, lots of sun throughout the day and very light winds.

We made our way to Mary Tavy car park with Jack's cross country navex in plenty of time for a 10 AM start.



Leaving Mary Tavy we were soon climbing up out of the valley following a route running roughly parallel to the Tavistock Okehampton Road (north east from Mary Tavy). We had good views of Wheal Betsy mine and soon we were up to a local high point with good views of the higher moors and the red flags marking the edge of the no go areas. We had our morning coffee break.

This was at the site of a strange narrow S shaped reservoir called Wheal Jewell reservoir and the sun was already quite hot, is this September (or July)???. Some took shelter from the sun, as you can see Jack and Fran chose the reservoir pumping station. Most of us though took the opportunity to enjoy the splendid views that the clear day afforded. the gliders at the local centre were easily visible on the ground a few miles away





Suitably refreshed, we began a descent passing several riding groups making the most of the day. After a half a mile or so in the generally southerly direction we found ourselves in Creason Woods beside a leat, Maurice indicated it was called Raleigh's Leat, how droll!!.

We dropped down to the river Tavy and came across Horndown Bridge in the woods with a few fish visible swimming just below.

Continuing generally southwards, we were out of the woods again and on a narrow metalled road. There were lots of unscheduled stops on this section since the blackberries were out and were really sweet.

We followed this narrow road for a mile or so and we found ourselves at Peter Tavy, but should we have gone this far. Perhaps the blackberry picking had caused a missed turning

This caused Jack some consternation since apparently we should have turned off this road up towards Stephens Grave on the moors.

No problems for Jack, he quickly rescheduled the route and we headed just south of east through another wood and came across a most unusual wooden bridge.

Here we took lunch as it was about 12.30 with an ideal shaded spot for the break.

Jack indicated that there was a fairly steep uphill section to follow and he wasn't wrong apart from just how long the uphill section would be.

After a couple of hundred yards we passed the Peter Tavy swimming pool, rather different to the Plymouth pools we are more familiar with in the big city. I thought he was joking but no, later in the



walk we passed the wooden bridge again and people from the village were indeed making their way up to the pool for a dip.



The path continued steeply up though bracken but soon we found ourselves by Cox Tor with good views back to Peter Tavy. There was a little map checking here and Jack indicated that we would soon be at Stephen's Grave and it would soon be mostly downhill from there.

We continued our uphill gradient leaving Great Staple Tor on our right and we could see White Tor some distance away. It was such a nice day that we decided to follow the contours around to White Tor. This added a further mile or more to the walk (it transpired) but the gentle uphill climb was certainly good for the lungs.

After a long ascent across open moorland north easterly we swung round west and picked up the track running below White Tor. A few hundred yards along and downhill now, we came across Stephen's Grave, a little cross where Stephen had been buried after committing suicide following being crossed in love!!!

We duly inspected the landmark and then continued downhill.



After a steepish descent along the path we found ourselves at the footbridge where we had taken lunch some 2 hours earlier. We had completed a rather large circle. We saw the locals going up to their pool and again took a break in this shaded spot.

Soon we were on our way again back to Peter Tavy. Passing through the village we walked by the Tavy again and then crossed it heading North West back towards Mary Tavy, about a mile away. Up and down some minor hills and we were back again at the car park just behind the local garage.

It was now getting on for 4.15 PM and we had been walking since 10 AM. A quick check of a couple of distance logs carried by Fran and Jack revealed that we had walked between 13 and 14 miles.

It had been an excellent day out in glorious weather and the extra miles were really a bonus on a day like this, but of course we didn't tell Jack that!!! Thanks Jack, a good walk enjoyed by everyone.