

GREAT MIS TOR AND UP THE WALKHAM VALLEY START POINT CP OFF MERRIVALE TO PRINCETOWN RD GR REF: 562749

This walk is for those that like river crossings, in the this case the Walkham. It also ventures into the Merrivale Firing Range once north of Grt Mis Tor and therefore can only be done at certain times. Always check with the military first for firing.

Remember the walk also involves river crossings to this is a walk to be undertaken only when the river is relatively low, in winter, it may often not be possible to do it !!!



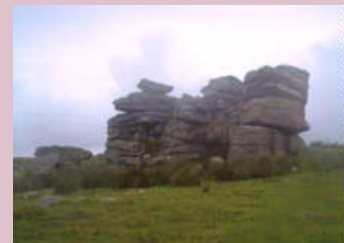
The route is as shown above. The inner red loop is of the order of 6 to 7 miles and involves two crossings of the Walkham, up near Dead Lake and another fifty yards or so downstream of the Grimstone and Sortridge leat take off.

The blue extension obviously adds on distance and will make it an 8/9 mile walk but it has only one river crossing, further up the Walkham and it should be an easier crossing too.

From the car park by the side of the road in a small wood cross the road, proceed through a small barrier and follow the track uphill towards Little Mis Tor.

Beyond Little Mis Tor the track deteriorates but the terrain is easy and a few hundred yards further up are the majestic rocks of Great MIS Tor.

As is obvious from the map, it is quite an uphill pull from the car park to these Tors, a climb of between 500 to 600 ft, all good for the soul.



Beyond Grt Mis Tor you are entering a restricted range area and therefore it is important to ensure that no firing is taking place. Red flags will be in evidence if the range is active.

Looking north from Grt Mis Tor the ground descends away to the Walkham Valley on the north west side and your route will take you down north towards the mini cleave through which the Walkham flows.

Once you have got beyond the rock scree around the Tor the going is easy and it is relatively dry as you head north.

Do not go too far north east on the descent though as Mistor marsh is there and it could be very wet indeed.

The route takes you down to overlooking the Walkham as it meanders down through a lovely sheltered valley. If you wish you can make your way down to the bank of the Walkham opposite a steep rocky outcrop and simply follow the Walkham upstream.



There are some very rewarding views whether you walk up along the banks or indeed stay higher and look down onto the valley.



For the red route crossing you will follow the river upstream until you see small stream running down from a Spring down a steep incline called Dead Lake. The grid reference of the crossing point is 566782

The river Walkham can be crossed here providing the river isn't too high.

Once across the river hopefully without getting too wet the route is very easy walking over easy short cropped grass maintaining the contour on the side of the valley as it sweeps west and then a gradual turn to the south west, easy walking the whole way.

The longer blue route just takes you further upstream by about a half a mile to meet a Dartmoor footpath shown in green on a 1:25000 OS map which heads north west across the moor and intercepts another track east of White Tor by a standing stone.

It is thought that the Walkham should be crossable at the point the track goes over the river, seems little point in having a track shown there otherwise !!! Am I being naive ?? The grid reference of this crossing point is 573783

Once over the Walkham, follow the contours of the moor and head west with the Walkham in the valley below you and after a mile you should see a restored stone circle.

For part of the way the two routes are very close together but as the red route swing south west the blue route rises up out of the valley to the restored stone circle.

The red route maintains the contours but looking down onto the Walkham the whole way.



As the Walkham swings south west there is a very well defined bronze age settlement remains visible, in fact it is a particularly well

defined one with lots of outlines of huts and other foundations. It must have been quite a village all those thousands of years before.

Even with the blue route it is well worth dropping down from Langstone Moor to view the settlement before continuing south west for the gradual one mile climb up to Roos Tor.

As is evident from the map above the red and blue routes divert at this point with the red route dropping down to the river and to the leat take off point and the blue longer route taking you up to visit first Roos Tor and then Grt Staple Tor before the steep descent down to Merrivale and the road.

From Merrivale there is a uphill section back along the edge of the road, better on the south side along the grassy areas to the car park again.



Although the red route is shorter it is actually more strenuous and involves a leat and then a further river crossing.

As you pass the leat take off point, look for a way of crossing the Grimstone and Sortridge Leat which has been relatively recently opened up again and now holds plenty of water.

With luck you should be able to manage it.

Make your way then down to the river and walk downstream for a short distance until you pluck up courage to cross the river.

I found a spot where the river was very shallow and there were boulders to step across and just a few inches of water to wade through. In summer I add and there wasn't too much water rushing along. A whole different proposition in winter or after a bout of heavy rain.



Once across the river head south east until you meet a wall called the Merrivale Enclosure.



Until January 01 there were stiles to take you into the enclosure and you could make your way SSE back across it contouring directly to the wall at the far side and so back to the car park with no problems.

The large area bounded by a dry stone wall is owned by a local farmer and is not Open Access.

In January 01 the access agreement with DNP was terminated by the farmer and you are requested not to enter this privately owned area.

Whether this means that you ignore this polite request and do so is another matter. The access stiles have been removed and therefore once in, there may be no easy way out.

Putting it politely, the farmer has taken his bat home and isn't playing any more. All this will change in a couple of years when the 'freedom to roam' is with us.

Until we are allowed to go into the enclosure again, you have a steepish climb up by the side of the dry stone wall heading south east until you are just below Little MIS Tor.



when you reach the high point of the dry stone wall, you can head south and make your way down again to where you intercept the track again.



All that is left is the final few hundred yards descent along the track to the start point car park once again, across the road where the car park is enclosed on 3 sides by trees.

These two walks both give brilliant views for the Walkham river and other Tors in the area and on a good summers day make for a nice few hours walk,

but remember you are walking in a military range for a good part of the walk, perhaps thats why it is so unspoilt !!!