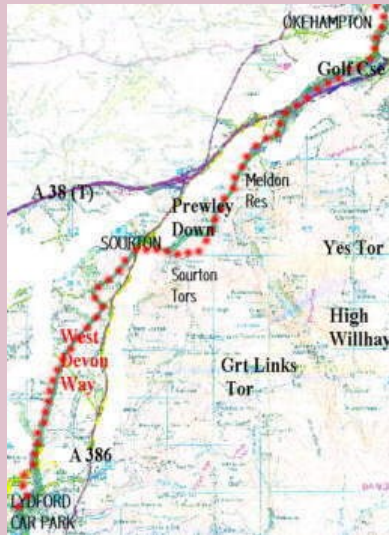


WEST DEVON WAY FROM OKEHAMPTON TO LYDFORD START POINT LYDFORD CP GRID REF: 513848

Janice Went led the 10 mile walk on Wednesday 15th Nov 2000 which attracted 21 walkers. Janice had planned a linear walk from Okehampton to Lydford along the West Devon Way. We met in the car park by Lydford Castle in time to catch the 10.30 AM bus, single fare £1.05p from Lydford to Okehampton.



The outline of the route we walked along the moorland fringes of Dartmoor is shown above. The route should be related to a 1:25000 map of the area such as the ordnance survey leisure map no 28 of Dartmoor.



The bus trip didn't take long and before 11 AM we were leaving the bus in the centre of Okehampton ready for the return along the West Devon Way back to Lydford.

The full West Devon Way used to run from Okehampton to Tavistock but in the last few years it has been greatly extended and now runs from Okehampton all the way back to Hooe on the east side of the Plym near the sea in

Plymouth.

We were soon making our way uphill, passing by the excellent Cottage Hospital serving the town and out of Okehampton.

Before long we were walking along the side of the West Okement river, which was flowing very strongly down though the town, after all the rain of recent weeks we could expect little but a strong flow down from the moors.

Yes, in case you don't know there is also a river called the East Okement and the pair of course give the town its name.





We passed by a bridge or two and then move up and away from the river through woods and onto a lane which led to Okehampton Golf course.

On our right across the valley we could see the old Okehampton Castle.

Soon we were following the public right of way which took us right through the centre of the golf course.

Luckily for us there weren't too many golfers around and we managed to get through without any damage.

We were walking roughly parallel to the A 30(T) dual carriageway and a half a mile after leaving the golf course we were on the road to Meldon viaduct and crossing the major road.

Only a couple of hundred yards along the road we turned off to the right and made our way down to the side of the West Okement River once again.



We made our way along the fast flowing river for a few hundred yards and then crossed over on old wooden bridge.

We climbed up through a wood and then across a couple of fields before emerging just south of the small hamlet of Meldon.

We were on a road heading south west for about 400 metres or so before moving onto a track leading up on to grass land with the moors to our left.

Ahead of us we could see Sourton Tor and to the left of Sourton the higher Corn Ridge. Below us was the Prewley Treatment Works and Prewley Down.

East of us we could pick out the two highest Tors on Dartmoor, Yes Tor and High Willhays, the highest being High Willhays at 621 metres.



The West Devon Way veered down below Sourton Tor, we continued on up nearer Sourton Tor and just below the old Ice Works.

A hundred years or so ago, ice was manufactured up here by pouring water into north facing pools and crevices and shipping the frozen blocks formed in the winter down to the fish markets in Plymouth.



Before reaching the Tor we swung North West downhill towards the village of Sourton and the main Tavistock Okehampton road.

Just before going over a bridge over the disused railway line, now a cycle track we stopped for lunch. After the break we made our way through the village with the church on our right hand side and over the main road.

Across the road was the Highwayman Inn with many curious features both outside and inside the pub.

The picture shows the shoe like front to the premises which can be seen very clearly as the inn is approached by road from Tavistock.



We passed by the inn and after a few yards along the road we turned off the road onto a footpath.

This led us south west across several fields for about a mile.



We crossed plenty of stiles en route and a reasonable amount of mud to boot before we emerged on a narrow country lane.

The road led us south east for about 300 yds and we could see the imposing high moors of Northern Dartmoor up ahead of us with the imposing Great Links Tor 3 miles away south east of us.

Before long there was a footpath to our right which led us across more fields and again plenty of mud on a bearing of about 210 degrees back in the general direction of Lydford less than 3 miles away.

In this final section there was lots of mud and water to contend with. After 9 fields and a similar number of stiles we crossed a road and continued on the same bearing though more fields before emerging onto Fernworthy Down.



We walked across the down for about half a mile descending quite steeply towards the end down towards a ford over a stream.

Only a mile to go and the rain started, once again we had almost managed a dry day but not quite.



After the ford there was an uphill section, across a road and south west along another even muddier track, before

swinging left for a couple of hundred yards along a road before the final even muddier path back to the village of Lydford.

We washed the mud off the boots and made our way down to road to Lydford Castle and the car park just opposite the Castle Hotel where we had caught the bus at 10.30 AM. We were back in the car park by just gone 3.20 PM and the rain was beginning to come down more heavily.

It had been rather a different walk to the normal trans Dartmoor routes, what it lacked in the bogs of Dartmoor it made up for in the pools and the mud of the lowland fringes.

Thanks to Janice for introducing us to another named route, the previous one led by her being the Erme Plym trail and we were hurrying to the cars for the drive back to Plymouth in the rain.