

PLYM BRIDGE TO GOODAMEAVY BRIDGE ALONG THE PLYM VALLEY START POINT GRID REF: 524 587

The walk was led by John Hutton on 5th December 99.



The weather forecast was good and we were surprised to arrive at Plym Bridge car park in light rain. Luckily it was only a passing shower and the rest of the day was virtually free of rain. This walk was scheduled as an easy walk of 7 to 8 miles and with the good weather, 33 of us arrived ready for the walk. A couple of keen and incredibly athletic young ladies even threw in a 3 mile trot from Roborough down the the start for good measure. They were certainly well warmed up for the off at 10:30 AM.

Route Outline

The walk was quite an easy one, up the left hand side of the Plym Valley from Plym Bridge to Shaugh Bridge for lunch and after, on up along the right bank up to Goodameavy Bridge.

Over the bridge, onto the disused railway line and back down the line through the tunnel and down to just before Bickeigh, where the route along the line is off limits.

By road up to Bickeigh and then down to the river again for a river walk for the rest of the way down, looking up at the viaducts we had crossed over during the morning.

Walk Description

At 10:30 AM we were off, making our way to the disused railway line which we continued along for a mile or so. This disused line is now a very popular walking and cycle route and it sweeps across steep valleys over 100 year old viaducts, still looking in excellent condition, despite their age.



On a day like this there were plenty of walkers, cyclists and joggers around and at times it was almost congested.

We left the railway line and made our way down to the valley below and to the river and for the rest of the morning we had the river beside us and to our right. As we walked, we met another group of walkers, Okehampton Ramblers, taking lunch by the river. They had come too far down as they were heading for the top of the Dewerstone.



We continued along the riverside up to Shaugh Bridge. We arrived at just about 12:30, ready for our

lunch break at the junction between the Meavy and the Plym at the local beauty spot, just east of the bridge, right by the river.

It was surprisingly mild in the pleasant, pale winter sun in the very light wind and many sat right by the river for the break.

After lunch we continued on up but now with the river Meavy on our left. We had one of our only real uphill sections as we climbed the path up to the scout hut under the Dewerstone. We continued along the path, with the river below us and gradually dropped down to the river again as we approached the bridge at Goodameavy.

This was the turning point and we crossed the road and made our way up the embankment to the disused railway line for the return journey.

Shortly after regaining the track, we had to go through the tunnel, which is long enough to be completely dark in the middle section. John had warned us to bring torches and they were very necessary as we made our way through the 350 metre tunnel.

The group were beginning to get quite stretched out along this narrow track.

About a mile down the track we had good views across the valley and to the Dewerstone on the other side.

There, silhouetted against the skyline were the group from Okehampton; they had achieved their aim of reaching the top of the Dewerstone, having expended far more energy than we had done since it is quite a climb up from Shaugh Bridge to the top.



There were lots of animals around and we passed one very unusual sight, that of a falconer with his bird, in the shape of a big eagle owl, sitting quite happily on his arm.

They both seemed quite happy to have their picture taken and the falconer confirmed that he did work the eagle in flying and hunting.

No wonder there weren't too many other birds in the vicinity at the time.

Once again, we were crossing high viaducts and on one, we saw ropes stretched across the bridge. There were people about



to abseil down the 200 foot drop. Don't know what happened to the picture I took unfortunately. I'm sure I could see someone abseiling down when I took it!!

Shortly after crossing the viaduct, we had to leave the line and follow the road for a few hundred yards up to Bickleigh, before dropping down to the line again.

The section of the line is privately owned but apparently not developed. Even so there is no right of way, perhaps that might change when the freedom to roam legislation is enacted.



We made our way right down to the riverside for the rest of the walk downstream, thereby avoiding any walking back over the same ground we had covered on our way up.

Although the walk was now relatively flat, from time to time the route required some climbing or descending along some quite narrow paths at times, thereby stretching the group out even more.

At points we were under the high viaducts we had walked across during the morning. They certainly are impressive, rising up from the valley floor as they do.

A quick stop for afternoon coffee, before the final 1.5 miles back along the riverbank to the car park. We passed by some interesting old archaeological evidence of industry in the area.

Further down the river, we walked by a strange in the river structure, which could have been the beginnings of a bridge, or perhaps it was there to break up the flow of the river. I've no idea!!

There were lots of people out enjoying the late afternoon, sure evidence that the car park and Plym Bridge must be close. Sure enough a few hundred yards further and we were crossing the bridge, now closed to vehicular traffic and were back to the cars.



It had been an easy walk, unusual for a ramblers walk in that there were hardly any hills to climb. It was a little further than had been advertised at an estimated 10.5 miles, but with the ease of the walk, the extra couple of miles were not the problem they could have been for some, had there been steep hills involved.