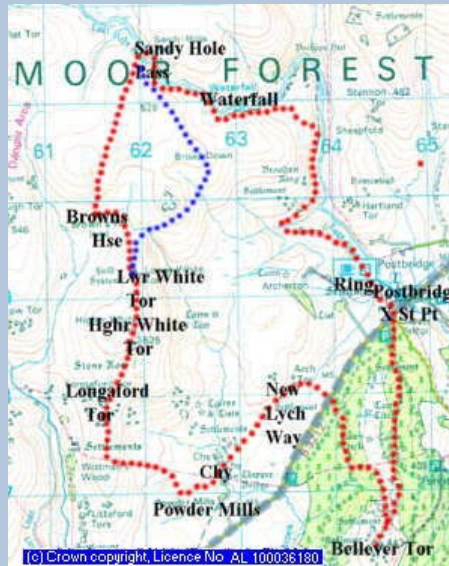


POSTBRIDGE, BELLEVER TOR, Lych Way, ACROSS TO EAST DART RIVER AND RETURN TO POSTBRIDGE

START POINT: POSTBRIDGE CAR PARK (647 789)

This walk was reccied by John Woodhams and I on 7th Aug 00 in preparation for the walk to be led by John in October.



We estimated it would be a 10 mile walk and would take up about 5.5 hrs including breaks.

On the actual day of the walk on 11th October Dartmoor was suffering from many inches of rain which had been dumped on the moor and the day continued in the same vein with some very heavy hail showers driven along by a strong south west wind.

These conditions stopped all but the hardiest of walkers and we started the walk with 7 walkers only. Luckily all were reasonable fast walkers and the pace was considerably higher than we had planned and the walk including only very short breaks took just over 4 hours.



After a visit to the information centre to find out about the route of the new Lych Way in the area we set off at 10.35 AM on a warm and generally sunny day.

But see remarks on the conditions in October when the walk actually took place.

We left the car park turned right and headed up to opposite the entrance to Bellever Forest. After crossing the main road we entered the forest and took the right hand path of the two available to us and headed due south up through the wood.

The track leading up the hill was gravelled to minimise erosion and we made good progress. We came upon another track decision and continued along the right hand of the two paths.



Before long we could see Bellever Tor ahead of us.

We passed through a dry stone wall and climbed up the wide easy track to Bellever Tor where we stopped to admire the views.



We had taken about 35 minutes to get to Bellever Tor from Postbridge Car park.

After a break to admire the panoramic views we were on our way again.

We retraced our steps down the path, heading south but before reaching the dry stone wall we cut across diagonally to meet the wall about 200 yards west of the point we passed through it on the way to the Tor.

We continued to make our way across to a tree line and intercepted a footpath heading west along the edge of the trees, this was the Lych Way.



We walked along the footpath for a few minutes until we found a new signpost indicating the changed route of the Lych Way. We followed the new route on about



340 degrees through the woods and before long we were at the main road where the Lych Way crossed to the other side and made its way through a quite marshy area.

We had taken 35 minutes to walk from Bellever Tor to this point.

We crossed the main road and followed the new Lych Way as it headed on 330 degrees across the boggy area.

At certain points slatted walkways had been installed over the particularly bad areas.



With the old route lower down the valley there had been no such assistance and the route was almost impassable.

The new path made crossing the marsh very easy indeed Soon enough we were at the far side of the marsh and then followed a series of blue markers which indicated the route to the new Lych Way.

The footpath now swung onto 230 degrees and took us in the general direction of Powder Mills.

Only 15 minutes after leaving the road we were approaching the gate leading us to the Powder Mills where gunpowder had been manufactured.

Just inside the gate we looked at a magnificent old building which must once have been one of the mills.



This was an ideal spot for morning coffee and after a 10 minute break we were on our way down towards one of the prominent chimneys in the area.

We walked by the chimney and through a clearly signposted gate and continued to follow the modified route, clearly

marked by blue marker posts.

We swung onto 300 degrees and began our ascent up to the high Tors up above us.

15 minutes after leaving the chimney we made our way through a dry stone wall and turned right towards Longaford Tor.



A further 10 minutes of climbing and we arrived at the Longaford Tor where we stopped to look back and admire the views of where we had walked so far.

Less than a half a mile on 020 degrees from Longaford was the next Tor en route, Higher White Tor.



About 15 minutes of easy uphill walking and we were at Higher White Tor and we soon made our way down to Lower White Tor less than half a mile to the north.



The section from Longaford to Lower White Tor had only taken us just over 20 minutes and we stopped here for a further 20 minute lunch break.

Our next point of call was Brown's House less than half a mile on a bearing of 330 degrees.

The direct route to Browns House was very boggy even in midsummer and although we swung north and then around to this ruined building we still had to take care to pick our way through the wet areas.



On the day the walk was scheduled the moor was far too wet to contemplate the Browns House route and we followed the line shown on the outline map which took us several hundred yards to the right of Browns house.

Having said that it only took us 15 minutes to reach this ruin.

Virtually 1.5 miles due north of us up over a hill and across a flat area was the East Dart river and Sandy Hole Pass.

We had a longish climb up over fairly tussocky ground to the top and then a long section across quite wet areas with plenty of local marshy areas to avoid.



This we successfully did and after a hard 30 minutes slog we arrived at the rocks above Sandy Hole Pass at the western extremity of the Pass.

We dropped down to the path close to the river and made our way through the pass.

At the far end was a sandy area with a largish pool although it didn't really look particularly inviting with the brackish water.

This was the hole which had given the pass its name.

After the pass the terrain flattened out and we followed the river as it looped around until we found the next local landmark, the Waterfall.



It took us 35 minutes from the western extremity of the pass to reach the waterfall.

We stopped here to inspect the small waterfall and to take an afternoon coffee break.

In October the small waterfall had been replaced by an absolute torrent of water and the stones over which the water poured were completely covered. Since there was a strong wind and a heavy hailstorm as we walked by the waterfall I didn't bother to try to take a picture of the changed water flow.

We followed the track around and had the choice of walking directly up over a hill or following a narrower path which swung left and kept us closer to the river.

The track took us up above the river and cut off the bend in the river which around the bend headed due south.



20 minutes after leaving the waterfall we came to a gate through a dry stone wall.



Through the wall, we turned left and descended steeply through bracken to a narrow path running along above the East Dart.

We continued along this path, avoiding the wetter and muddier areas, where we could, and crossed two old walls.

Towards the second wall, the path swung right and away from the river as it ran parallel to a brook.

Just beyond a stile by the second wall we turned left and made our way steeply down to cross the brook and then up the other side to a wide path heading south east.



To our left was a huge stone circular wall, called Roundy Park settlement.

This settlement must have had great significance thousands of years ago, it is one of the largest I have seen on Dartmoor.



We followed the clear path down as it ran close by the East Dart River, through a gate by some trees and on along a fairly flat section leading back to the car park at Postbridge. It took us about 1 hr 15 minutes to walk back to the car park from the Waterfalls.



We ended up as we had started, by calling into the Information Centre to give feedback on the walk to the staff who had helped us at the start of the walk.

We deliberated about the advisability of visiting Browns House in October with the likelihood of wetter and marshier areas than that we visited in August.

We think it would be safer, after Lower White Tor, to go via the head of Hollowcambe Bottom and up to Broad Down and beyond before swinging back onto 320 degrees to head back and across to Sandy Hole Pass.

The alternative route from Lower White Tor is also shown as a blue dotted line on the map.

