

GUTTER TOR TO GRANTSPOT CIRCULAR MOORLAND WALK

START POINT GRID REF: 578674

This walk of moorland took place on 17th November 99 and was led by Geoff Thomas. The start point for the Walk was from the car park below Gutter Tor and at 10am, there were 15 ramblers, wet weather gear on, and ready for the start of the walk.

We left the car park heading south east, crossed a small ford and then passed a copse with a scout hut in it to our right. We followed a rough path uphill for about a mile on a bearing of 065 degrees until we reached the mine workings of Eylesbarrow at the top. We took the right hand path at this point and continued down past more mine workings and then to the first river crossing of many during the day, Plym Ford.



The crossing at Plym Ford brought us in contact with the Abbots Way route for a very short distance.

Having made it over the ford, we stopped for morning coffee before continuing our ascent up on a bearing of 135 degrees over moderate moorland and on up to Great Gnat's Head.

This point is marked by a pile of small stones and from here there are very good views back across the moor to Plymouth and the sea in the distance.

Leaving Great Gnat's Head we walked on a compass bearing of 118 degrees across moderately marshy, and subsequently very wet, thick moorland grass and tussocks.



We continued in this vein for about a mile, stumbling and squelching our way across the moor until we reached the next point of reference, GrantsPot. We must have passed very close to Duckspool, the site of one of the first of the Dartmoor letter boxes, Crossing's Memorial, without any apparent visual clue of it's presence.



Geoff had said that GrantsPot was difficult to find since it was only a little hole in the ground. He was right. We found our way to a valley with a stream called Blacklane Brook running through it and then made our way along the

	west side until we found the indentation in the ground.
GrantsPot is a small cave, one of the few natural ones on Dartmoor and we stopped for a while, to look at the cave and to encourage one member of the party to enter the cave to get the letterbox stamp which we knew was there. Norman Chynoweth eventually volunteered and squeezed into the cave to retrieve the letterbox stamp. He can be seen emerging from the narrow cave entrance.	Geoff used the stamp to mark his map and book at the appropriate point. Normally ramblers don't engage in letterboxing on Dartmoor, however having got this far it was nice to record the fact in some way.
We crossed the small stream at the valley bottom and went up stream for a short distance until we found another cave called Philpott's Cave. Geoff, our walks leader, inspected the cave and surrounds for a lunch break location out of the wind. This cave was above ground, formed by suitably positioned granite slabs. At this point, we stopped and tucked in behind rocks to avoid the northerly breeze and have our lunch.	After lunch, we made our way back the valley over the stream again, past GrantsPot and then on over moderate moorland for less than a half mile on 260 degrees until we reached Erme Pits. It is interesting to note that the OS 1:25000 map of Dartmoor shows neither GrantsPot nor Philpott's cave, two unusual features. I wonder why?
Erme Pitts is the site of the yet more Dartmoor mining and from the number of rocks strewn around and the hillocks which we crossed over, it must a been a very big mining site in its day. Some of the hillocks we climbed were quite steep and after the traverse across this old mine working we were once again on rough moorland and climbing.	Back on the rough moorland again, we were soon on a compass bearing of 250 degrees, heading for yet another landmark, one of many such landmarks one finds on Dartmoor. This time, it was the site of a grave called Grime's Grave. No-one was aware of the history of the grave, Grant in his reference work on Dartmoor



suggests it was a Kistvaen. We all gathered around the site of the grave to have a look at the stone at the bottom, there were even bones in it, but not Mr Grimes' we were assured.



Having inspected the grave, we descended the eastern side of the valley carrying Langcombe Brook and were on our way back on a bearing of approx 320 degrees. After a mile or so, we forded yet another stream in the vicinity of the DeadMan's Bottom, a relatively easy crossing with no wet feet.

We continued to make our way back along the valley until we came to yet another river crossing, shown on the OS map as Plym Steps.

Although the river at this point was rather deeper than Geoff had envisaged, we all managed to cross this, some got wet feet for their efforts, me included. Shortly afterwards in a sheltered spot near the river, we stopped for afternoon coffee.



As can be seen, Eric revelled in his photo opportunity as he crossed the stream.



At this point we were within about 1.5 miles of the car park. We continued on a bearing of 270 degrees but deviated from the planned route slightly, to look at the old large stones near Didsworthy Warren area.

PRINCETOWN, GREAT MIS TOR, MERRIVALE AND RETURN VIA THE OLD RAILWAY LINE

START POINT GRID REF: 589753

This Wednesday walk was done on 24th Nov 99. As we drove across the moors to the start at Princetown CP we wondered what we had let ourselves in for. The rain was lashing down and we were in thick cloud.

We rushed into the toilet close to the cars to get change and when we emerged the

rain seemed to be easing. By 10 AM we had 8 ramblers ready for the walk led by Ray Manley. Ray normally wears shorts but he too had given into the elements and was in full wet weather gear. After a minimalist briefing we were off.



The route was to take us up to North Hessary Tor, on to Great MIS Tor, across the valley and over the River Walkham and up to Roos Tor, down to Dartmoor Inn at Merrivale for lunch, down the valley in the Walkhampton direction, but turning up to the moors again by Ingra Tor, onto the old Princetown line for the return around Kings Tor and into FogginTor and finally back along the line to Princetown CP. That was the plot anyway, a total of getting on for 12 miles.

Leaving the car park in the rain, we were soon yomping away as the Wednesday group do, uphill for the first mile until we reached North Hessary Tor.



On the way up the cloud cleared and we had

views of Princetown looking back. The gloom of course doesn't enable good pictures. That's my excuse!

We continued on a bearing of 310 climbing up until we reached North Hessary Tor. The mast was once the main TV transmitter for the area but now I understand it is for radio only.



The mast is very high but the fog or cloud was such that we could only see the bottom third of it.

After this brief photo opportunity we were off again in the fog. We then headed off towards the next main Tor, that of Great MIS Tor on a bearing of about 325 about 2 miles further on.

In the fog we couldn't see much and we found ourselves passing a small Tor.



This was called Hollow Tor and it was slightly off the planned route. No problem it was quite close to the right route.

As we dropped down the visibility improved and we could see a house by the main road. Anyone who says that there are no wind generators on Dartmoor is wrong.



There definitely is one because we walked past it. I assume it provides the power necessary for the farm house. Onto the road and up the hill to the point where we intended to cross it. We were back on track

We continued up a moderate slope at good pace, until Little MIS Tor appeared out of the gloom on our left. About a quarter of a mile on and we were at our morning coffee stop at Great MIS Tor.



It as supposed to be a mild day at 12 degrees, up here in the cloud and the howling wind the chill factor must have dropped it quite close to freezing. Views - thick cloud surrounded us. The only advantage of that is the army wouldn't be firing blind - or would they? - we were right on the edge of the danger area.

Coffee over and we were descending steeply across Dartmoor granite boulders down towards the River Walkham on a bearing of 260 degrees.

The Walkham was flowing quite strongly after the recent rain and the crossing point was less than obvious. Stepping stones, what a luxury!!

We split into two groups, eventually one group made it across whilst we continued downstream

looking for a crossing.



Narrowly avoiding a bog, Maria didn't!! we found a point which looked vaguely fordable and all managed to get across without water over the top of the boots (just).

There was a slight change of plan because of the time to find the crossing.

Looking back towards Great MIS Tor we could see the clouds had lifted and it was now clearly visible.

We didn't go up to Roos Tor but went on down to the bridges at Merrivale, passing the Dartmoor Inn with barely a glance.

After lunch, we crossed over the main road, up the road a few yards and turned right through a farm and along a well trodden path.

We followed this path through woods and generally down hill parallel to the Walkham below and to our right. We were heading more or less due south and continued for getting on for two miles until we found the road crossing we were looking for.



We negotiated a herd of milking cows making their way up the lane, turned sharp left at the crossing, up a small road/track and back onto the moor. On our right we had Ingra Tor about a quarter of a mile up the moor

Eventually we found a path marked with posts which climbed quite steeply up towards the old railway line. We followed the path at a good speed for getting on for a mile on 060 degrees until we intercepted the old line. The rest of the walk was plain sailing (sorry walking).

The old railway track swung right around Kings Tor and the old granite quarries which provided the rocks for London Bridge and many other important landmarks around England.

The walking pace went up a few notches on this relatively easy incline.



We deviated from the track into the entrance to Foggintor for afternoon coffee, to get out of the wind, before the final 20 minute (1.5 m) spurt along the line and back to the car park again. We were back in the car park by about 3 PM and the weather was quite different to the conditions we had set off in.

We thanked Ray for his efforts and to whoever had taken mercy on us with the improved conditions during the day. We were on our way back to Plymouth once again having covered getting on for 12 miles during the day. Good walking once again!

We had been lucky with the weather, as the forecast had been for a strong north-easterly breeze, with many heavy showers. In reality we had some sharp showers, but the breeze was not as strong as the forecast had predicted.

Those with pedometers confirmed that we had walked about 8.5 miles. It had been yet another good, interesting walk, thanks to Geoff for his excellent map reading the navigation across the rough terrain had been excellent.

Even now, after two years or more, of walks with Plymouth Ramblers, I am still meeting areas that I have never walked before. Long may it continue.