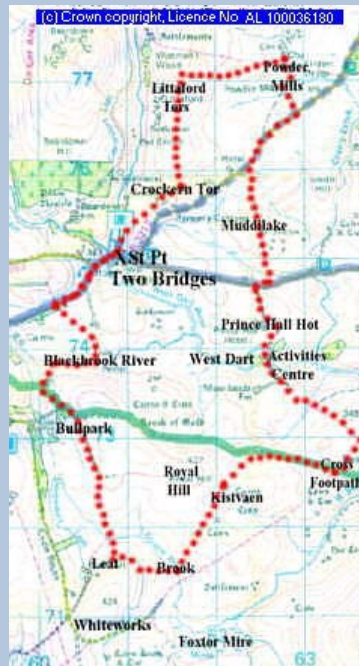


A WALK SOUTH AND NORTH AND EAST OF TWO BRIDGES START POINT GRID REF: 608 751

For once we had a Saturday walk, we haven't had very many of those over the past two years, but on 12th Aug 00 it was tried for the second time in a month. On an overcast day, 9 ramblers made it to the start at the Two Bridges car park for the walk led by Maurice Taylor.

The route covered some areas of the moor that the group not walked all that often which made it all the more interesting as far as I was concerned.



An outline of the route taken is shown above.

Naturally to fully appreciate the route and the footpaths followed the route should be related to a 1:25000 ordnance survey map of the area and of course to the description of the walk. The Leisure map no 28 of Dartmoor is the best one to use for all Dartmoor walks.



At 10 AM Maurice gave a very short introduction to the walk "we're off" and away we went.

We left the car park and turned along the road back towards Princetown.

The road can be busy sometimes and so we were quite pleased that after a few hundred yards we turned left, off the road and headed south east along a footpath and

then onto open moorland.

After a couple of hundred yards we came upon a footpath sign, now in many parts of the country this signpost is obvious.



On Dartmoor to ensure the sheep also understand rather more graphic influences are applied and no one could mistake that this is a footpath sign with the boot on the top.

The footpath swung south after a half a mile and we headed down across slightly boggy ground towards a river at the bottom.



It looked as if it could prove rather difficult to cross but in recent years the Dartmoor National Parks had placed some excellent wooden footbridges at strategic points and over the river there was such a convenient bridge.

We crossed Blackbrook river, turned right and headed upstream.

We disturbed a large heron from his fishing and he flew a short distance and waited, disdainfully, for us to pass.

We walked upstream for a few hundred yards until we could see a stone bridge, odd looking by Dartmoor standards, across the river.

There was another small bridge on the left side of the river and we crossed this footbridge and then swung left by the ugly bridge and headed south west, passing an outdoor adventure centre en route called Bachelor's Hill, just below the path we were following.



We continued along the wide bridleway as it meandered its way uphill through a small copse passing a house marked on the map as Bull Park. I imagine Bulls were 'parked' here!!.

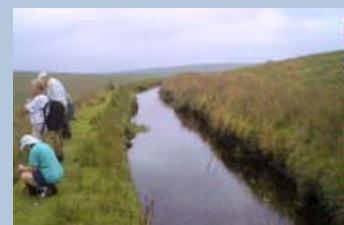
Just beyond the house, we left the wood, walked through a gate and onto open moorland once again.

Shortly after passing through the gate the bridlepath offered a choice, take the left fork and up to the Crock of Gold or continue along parallel to a dry stone wall.

We chose the latter path and made quick progress along the bridleway for over a mile.

As we reached lower ground it became more marshy and once again the National parks had placed a strategic bridge at one point.

We walked up a slope to a footpath sign, ignored the turning to the right through the dry stone wall and continued up along by the wall until we met the Devonport Leat, constructed to carry water down to Devonport, a few hundred years ago.



The views from the leat were good and we had our morning break by the side of the leat.

We turned left and after the break, followed the leat for a few hundred years as it followed the contours around the hill until we could see the eastern side of the treacherous FoxTor mire.



We descended down into some low and, I imagine, very boggy ground in winter. Even in August it was still quite damp in places and we had to tread with care.

At the bottom there was the usual brook to negotiate and one or two ramblers needed a little assistance to leap across the brook.

We all managed it, none of us getting wet, with or without assistance.

From the other side of the brook we made our way up north east towards the top of Royal Hill, so called because of members of the Royal family who used to holiday in the area pre second world war.

We passed to the right of the top of the hill and made our way towards an exceedingly good example of a kistvaen and small stone circle, one of hundreds all over the moor.



As we were unsure of it's name, it was suggested and agreed the the Prince Maurice kistvaen was a suitable name to give it.

From the kistvaen we swung more east and found a footpath heading just south of east.



We continued along the footpath until we came across a cross roads of footpaths , indicating routes to Whiteworks, 2 Bridges, Hexworthy and the direction we wanted towards Sherburton.

We headed off north east, passing yet another dry stone wall and continuing along the edge of an enclosure until we saw another path, 90 degrees from the track

we were on.

This track headed towards our lunch stop, just below an outdoor adventure centre called the Dartmoor Training Centre, visible 1 mile to the north west of us.



We followed the track heading in the direction of the centre, crossing over a small brook called Red Lake.

After some more minor undulations and another small brook to ford the bridleway turned into a new concreted road leading directly down to the adventure centre and up to the Prince Hall Hotel behind it.



We followed the concrete strip as it descended to the Adventure Centre and came upon a very nice old bridge just before the Centre over the West Dart River which we had first crossed as we left Two Bridges.

We crossed the bridge and stopped by the side of the river, just beyond the bridge, for lunch.

After lunch, we made our way up and around the Prince Hall Hotel, where, in addition to the hotel, there were quite a cluster of old farm buldings.

At the side of one of them, facing the narrow road we were walking, was one with dove roosting cotes on the side.

A quick stop to admire them and we were on our way up to cross the Two Bridges to Dartmeet road.

We turned right, walked along the road but only for a hundred yards when we followed a footpath sign off to our left which took us generally north, for just under a mile, towards the Cherrybrook Hotel, off the Two Bridges to Postbridge road.

I had always imagined that the Muddilake area would be quite wet but it was surprisingly firm and easy enough to cross.

Maurice had aimed for a 10 mile walk and we turned onto the road and walked along it, heading for Postbridge for 3 or 400 hundred yards until we came to the Powder Mills pottery turning. I was quite pleased to see the turning as main roads plus walkers equals danger.



We were soon approaching the pottery and just beyond it, another outdoor activities centre and residential complex.

We passed by this complex and approached the actual old Powder Mills area . There were many old derelict buildings and crushing mills in the area, whose wheels were driven by water carried by leats from the East Dart River, three miles to the north.

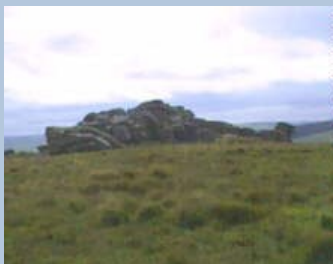
Why the old cannon? to test the gunpowder I guess.

The area is called Powder Mills as the prime activity here was the manufacture of gunpowder for the mines which proliferated in the area.

We stopped by one of the two very well preserved chimneys for an afternoon break and then we swung west and began our return to Two Bridges 2 miles to the south west of us.

We left the area through a kissing gate and followed a well defined footpath from Powder Mills along and then uphill.

En route we passed what looked like a scree field, not given a name on the map, perhaps it was an old mine working area, close as it was to Powders Mills.



We passed through a dry stone wall and a stile and up to the crest of a hill with Tors to the right at Longaford Tor and Littaford Tors to our left.

At the crest of the hill we turned left and made our way around the sprawl of the Littaford Tors area and made our way along a well used path leading almost due south.

We crossed a stile over yet another dry stone wall and continued south, making quick progress towards Crocken Tor, which sits above the road linking Two Bridges and Postbridge.

After a fifteen minute walk from Littaford Tor we were at Crockern Tor and admiring the views.

Crockern Tor is known as the site for the old Tinnars parliament, centuries ago, although there is little to remind us now of its prestige role, perhaps due to its ease of access from the track which was probably once there where the road is now.



It is only just over a half a mile as the crow flies from Crockern Tor back to the car park at Two Bridges.

We took the direct route down over the hill, south west from the Tor.

We made our way through a gap in the stone wall and after a little dip into a small valley we continued up

over the crest of the hill and there was the car park, the road and the Two Bridges Hotel below and ahead of us.

Down over the last hill to the path and through the gate and we were back at the car park again after a good paced 10 mile walk on a nice day for walking.

Personally, I had walked several areas that I had not covered before, particularly the area from east of Whiteworks right round and back to the Powder Mills area.



We thanked Maurice for his efforts and laid back leadership style and soon were on our way back to Plymouth, via Princetown and Yelverton.

Both Two Bridges and Postbridge are good starting points for Dartmoor walks with good car parking and scenic river walks along the West Dart and East Dart rivers respectively.