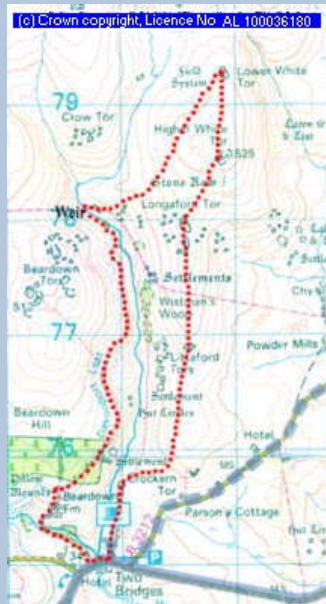


TWO BRIDGES TO LOWER WHITE TOR AND RETURN VIA DEVONPORT LEAT

START POINT GRID REF: 752607

The walk from Two Bridges up to the moors to the north east and back via the start of the Devonport Leat is a relatively easy 7 mile walk and was led by John Davies on 9th Apr 00.



The map above outlines the walk route we took. To gain a good appreciation of the route this outline should be related to a 1:25000 map of Dartmoor and to this write up.



Over 30 walkers gathered at the quarry car park across the road from the hotel at Two Bridges for the walk which was scheduled to start at 10.30 AM. There was a cool north east wind blowing and so we were soon off passing through the gate in the car park which led up to the moors.

We were all pleased to see Helen Rowett joining us, if only for a short distance, just about two months after breaking her ankle in February.

The first section of the walk was along an easy track which ran alongside a dry stone wall and which took us up to Crockern Farm.

Although not easily visible below us over the wall, we were walking along the side of the West Dart River. We skirted the farm and then we left the track and were soon on moorland as we continued to climb.





We soon came upon a finger post which pointed us in the direction of Crockern Tor.

We made our way towards a gate/stile and over the stile we turned east and climbed up the hill to the first Tor of the walk, Crockern Tor.

Apparently Crockern Tor was the meeting place of the Stannary Parliament for Dartmoor hundreds of years ago, quite bleak and cold the stannary discussions would not have taken over long.

There were good views across to the Mortonhamstead Road below us to our south but surprisingly little evidence of the heavy snow which had hit the region only a few days ago.



Leaving the Tor we headed across open moorland climbing slowly, the moorland grass was short in this area and consequently walking was easy.

After about half a mile we climbed over a dry stone wall using the stile and we could see two more Tors above us, Cittaford Tor and behind it and a further half a mile beyond Longaford Tor.

There were good views from this vantage point of the moors, to the west we could see Beardown Tors and to the east the marshy area leading to Powder Mills Farm and the road to Postbridge.

We soon reached Cittaford Tors with several small outcrops and continued on still heading due north to Longaford Tor.

Although I had walked this route before I had forgotten just how many Tors there were quite close together.



The last vestiges of the recent snowfall began to be seen on these local high spots.

If you look carefully at the photographs of the Tors which follow the signs of the snow can just about be seen. Compare these with the photographs taken only four days previously, six miles north of this area on the Belstone to Hangingstone Hill walk.



Only a half a mile of walking due north from Littafor Tor and we were at Longaford Tor, rather bigger than the previous one. Just to prove that photographs can be misinterpreted it looks as if Littafor is bigger than Longaford, it's not, I took the picture from further away for Longaford!!

Some would argue that most Tors look alike, after all they are only lumps of granite. To the purist though each one has its own signature.

After a quick stop at Longaford Tor we were off again, heading just east of north on a bearing of 030 degrees up to the highest point we would be visiting during the walk.

This local high point is Higher White Tor and is at an altitude of 522 metres.

In this exposed place the wind was inducing a decided chill factor and so we were keen to press on.

On a warmer day it would be nice to stop and pick out all the main reference points around the area to better relate to the OS map of the area, with the chill factor we were keen to press on to get more out of the wind.



Over the next half a mile we descended only 20 metres as we headed due north again to Lower White Tor with good views again to the ruin known as Browns House across the valley and to Rough Tor just under a mile to the west.

From Lower White Tor we could see the Television Mast at North Hessary Tor and we headed off in the direction of the mast, on a bearing of 230 degrees descending across rougher and much wetter almost boggy moorland towards a dry stone wall running down from Higher White Tor.

We could see a gate and a stile just to the right of the gate and we made our way down to and over the stile onto rough moorland with lots of grass tussocks to walk over.

We continued on roughly the same bearing for 300 hundred yards and then turned on a bearing of 260 degrees as we made our way down to the valley below.





In the valley bottom we could see a stile, what looked like a bridge and on the other side a green hut and this was to be our lunch break point, hopefully down out of the wind.

We had to take care since there was some granite scree and a steep if short descent down to the East Dart below.

Picking our way down, as there was no discernable track, we climbed the stile and found that the bridge was in fact a man made weir which we could easily ford.

We crossed the East Dart River at this point and could see that water was venting out in a controlled manner into a Leat just above the river itself. This was the start of the Devonport Leat used to carry water hundreds of years ago down into Plymouth. It also serves to explain why the man made weir was built in this remote spot; the need for fresh water some fifteen miles away at Plymouth.



There was a flat grassy area just to one side of the man made weir and we settled here for our lunch break. The cold wind was still finding its way up through the valley and cooling us somewhat but the chill factor was much less than on Higher White Tor up above us a half a mile to the north east.



After lunch, we walked along the narrow path on the left hand side of Devonport Leat. This narrow track is on the side of the valley with the East Dart River flowing along at the bottom.

The leat meanders slightly but heads generally southerly and makes for relatively level walking.

The group passed under Beardown Tors without really realising it was above us and after a mile or more of leat side walking we entered a wooded area called Beardown Hill with the leat turning more southwesterly.

In the woods, there is still plenty of evidence of the high winds of ten years ago and many trees still lay where they fell all those years ago.





We exited the wood, climbed over a stile and continued along the leat for a few hundred yards until we came to a track heading down to Beardown Farm below us.

Leaving the leat at this point, we headed down and skirted around the farm and continued our descent along the track to a bridge. Just before the bridge we stopped by the side of the Cowsic River for our

afternoon break.

Returning to the track we crossed over a bridge and followed the wooded banks of the river. At this point there are several stones carrying the names of poets and playwrights of two hundred years ago, unfortunately many of these stones are now lichen covered and the names are only just visible.

Why no pictures of the bridge or the rocks..I'd run out of storage on my digital camera!! Come back Jack (or Fran), all is forgiven.

We could see the car park a couple of hundred yards east and followed the track through the woods and fields, over a couple of stiles and so onto the main road passing by Two Bridges.

We turned left, crossed the main bridge of the two bridges, giving the area its name, and turned left into the quarry car park again at about 2.45 PM.

The walk was a shade over 7 miles and we had been out for a little over 4 hours, so as indicated in the walks list the walk had been easy paced indeed, just as John had promised at 10.30 AM.



Thanks to John for leading the walk and for arranging the rain to hold off all day and we were on our way back to Plymouth where it was many degrees warmer than up on the moors.