

TWO BRIDGES TO POSTBRIDGE LINEAR WALK
START POINT TWO BRIDGES CP GRID REF: 608750
DISTANCE 9 miles

A linear walk does make a nice change, but it isn't something we do that frequently, as you can see from the fact that this is the only linear walk described out of the approaching 100 walks on Dartmoor on our web site.

The idea for it came from the leader, John Hutton, who usually tries to offer something a little different on his walks. This one most certainly was different with a bus out from Plymouth to Two Bridges, a no 82 trans moor bus incidentally, with the return from Postbridge. You could always arrange with a friend to meet at the far end, leave a car there and take the other to the start point, which 5 out of the 11 who came out on the walk actually did.

We did the walk on 1st June after a week of very hot weather in the West Country. The forecast wasn't good but the reality was a good Dartmoor walking day with temperature rising to 16 degrees C, plenty of sun, no rain at all and a cooling breeze, an ideal Dartmoor walking day in fact.



The outline map of the route is shown above and should be used in conjunction with the Dartmoor OS leisure map no 28 of Dartmoor and of course the description you are reading now.



The bus from Plymouth arrived at 10.30 AM and we were soon on our way, out of the Two Bridges car park, along the road towards Princetown, across the road bridge over the West Dart river, only for a short distance and then we swung off to the right, down a grassy track and over a few stiles.

This section of the walk took us relatively close to the Cowsic River just before it joins the East Dart.

It was initially across a field or two before it entered woodland running down to the river. Before long, we were climbing out of the woods and up to Beardown Bridge. The rocks below the bridge are notable for the names of poets engraved into the rocks.

Sadly the rocks are gradually getting covered with lichen and therefore the names are disappearing from view and may be lost unless some preservation organisation decides to clean the rocks to maintain them for public view.

Once over the bridge, we followed the track up to Beardown Farm and on beyond up to Devonport Leat,

Normally we turn right and follow the leat along but John was certainly aiming to show us something different.



We carried straight on up the track and out onto the open moors sitting above the Beardown plantation.

Once out onto the open moors, the track was easy enough to follow as it climbed up and curved its way.

High up on the moors above us we could see a dry stone wall with a gate and a stile and this was our

target. The track disappeared and we continued to climb up, as expected it was a long climb up to the first Tors from Two Bridges, now way below us.

Once through the dry stone wall the terrain levelled a little and we headed on towards Beardown Tors with the military flagpole clearly visible at the top of the nearest of three Tors comprising Beardown Tors.



We made our way up to the nearest of the three Tors, passed by without stopping and onto the second of the three where we stopped for our first well earned break of the walk for our mid morning sustenance, tea/coffee and light refreshments served with good views all round.

We had walked between 1.5 and 2 miles and it had been uphill the whole way from the road, a climb of over 500 feet. The rest stop was called for, but it was only a short one as 5 minutes later John had us on our way again.

Our next target was the stile over the dry stone wall in the near distance, just a hundred yards to the east of Lydford Tor.



Once across the stile, the next mile was NNW over gently rising and somewhat marshy ground towards the Devils Tor area and Beardown Man, a well known and imposing Dartmoor Menhir (standing stone).

Luckily, it had been relatively dry for some time and the wet ground wasn't that bad and easy enough to get across. Twenty minutes later we were approaching Devils' Tor and once by it the

short distance beyond to stand by Beardown Man and savour the atmosphere and the views across the valley to the west and Conies Down beyond.

The walk then took us more or less due east across more notoriously wet ground, after rains which we hadn't had luckily and up to another Tor again, crowned with the military flagpole.

It was easy enough to see that we were into the Merrivale firing range area with the flagposts, military huts and the marker posts. No problems on this Sunday in June though, no firing.



If anyone is unsure of when the army do fire then click on the links to other sites from our home page and you'll get all the information you need to reassure yourself, or get very worried about!!

Once we had picked our way around the wettest areas leading to Rough Tor we were soon there, another impressive Tor.



Lunchtime pangs but no, not until we had reached the next Tor of the walk, due south across wet but less wet than the earlier sections descending gradually towards Crow Tor.

From the southern side of Crow Tor, there are fine views looking down the West Dart River and across to one of the three remaining oak woods on

Dartmoor, Wistmans Wood, on the eastern banks of the river.

Our next goal, to get down and across the East Dart, usually no problems although after heavy rains it can be almost impossible to cross.

This was to be the only river crossing without a bridge on the walk and since the weather had been good for a week or more, no problems were anticipated.

We left Crow Tor and descended heading south east; we made our way across a semi collapsed dry stone wall and then on down to a more substantial dry stone wall which had a stile over it, easy enough to cross.



John had found some large granite boulders across the East Dart a short distance to the south east and we made our way down to them and across the river with no real bother.



Once to the east of the river it was another uphill slog across tussocky, north east up to a locked gate and a stile across another dry stone wall.

Once over that hurdle, John took us left and uphill beside the dry stone wall to our right.

After a stiff climb up towards the Higher and Lower White Tors, the ground began to get a little boggier

and so John led the group north along quite level ground and onto Lower White Tor, again with great views all round from the rocks of the Tor.

This was to be the last really close encounter with Tors on this walk. We left the Tor and descended NNE to the corner of enclosed land with the Cherry Brook running down off the higher moors down a steep sided but small valley shown as Hollowcombe Bottom on the 1:25000 map.

We headed for the corner where a dry stone wall extended uphill and down the valley, knowing there is an easy crossing point over the brook at that point.



Over the brook without difficulty and then for a mile or more of walking along the side of the dry stone wall which extended in a dead straight line heading due north east as it went uphill steeply, down again to the next valley and then uphill yet again to below Broad Down.

This was a section that I had never walked before as I'd always made my way up to Sandy Hole Pass and followed the East Dart river back.

There was another brook to cross at the bottom of the first up and down section but it was easy enough to get across.

The ground and the dry stone wall was certainly undulating, to say the least, up we went, easy enough and then down again and up once more towards a small rocky outcrop.

John led the group all the way along and then down to a disused leat running high above the West Dart.

I wanted to see an old clapper bridge over the leat, called Braddon Leat incidentally on the 1:25000 map.



To achieve my personal goal, I turned right, over the dry stone wall and then followed a nice short grassed path which led down south east towards another dry stone wall heading due south and then followed along to the west of it until the dry stone wall swung off round to the east.



Continuing due south for a very short distance beyond the point where the dry stone wall swung east, I soon came to the substantial clapper I had been looking for.

The leat hadn't been used since the Powder Mills had ceased production a long long time ago, it seemed a bit of an anachronism, sitting there and serving no purpose.

There is a well defined track and official PROW footpath leading from the leat right back to Postbridge and this was to be our route back to our destination.

Not far beyond the leat there was a stream running down into the East Dart which was a little more difficult to cross without dipping the boots into the water.



Once across that, I made my way east for a hundred yards and waited for the rest of the group to appear from their stroll along high above the river along the side of Braddon Leat.

We stopped for an afternoon break before the final 0.8 mile back along the right of way and into the Postbridge car park.



The track led south east along the side of a very old iron age settlement, Roundy Park settlement on the map.

Before long we came to a gate leading off the moor and through enclosed land for the few hundred yards back to the car park.

The track here is very well defined and there are at least four mini clapper bridges over little streams leading down to the the river. I sometimes wonder just how many of these small streams there are feeding into the West and East Dart to swell it to the wide river it becomes as it leaves the moor.

Along the path and we could see a building off to our left and the cars in the car park just beyond the building.



There was a little track leading off the right of way directly into the car park; we had set off at 10.35 AM and arrived at our target of Postbridge at just gone 3.30 PM.

It had been a good walk, and yes it was nice to do a linear one. I could get in my car immediately and drive the others back to their cars at Postbridge, the bus passengers had to wait for the 4.20 PM bus.



This was no big deal though since there is a Dartmoor National Parks information centres at Postbridge and also a little cafe a short distance out of the car park before the large and beautiful clapper bridge over the river.

By car, Postbridge is only 30 to 40 minutes drive from Plymouth and by bus only an hour.

For those contemplating the walk at another time I'm reliably informed the return bus fare is only £3 and in the summer the bus out leaves Bretonside, Plymouth at 9.20 ish and returns from Postbridge at 2.20 and 4.20 PM.