



**Burrator Reservoir to Ditsworthy Warren**

**A largely moorland walk, with a few quiet country lanes and woodland paths; long gradual climbs with plenty of wonderful views and an opportunity to visit the graves of the White Rajahs of Sarawak**

Essential Facts	
▪ Route distance:	20.0 km (12.5 miles)
▪ Approximate time:	5 hours 45 mins
▪ Approx. total ascent:	320 metres
▪ Start point Grid Ref:	SX 549 677
▪ GPS Ref:	SX 54952 67708
▪ Recommended O.S. Map:	OL 28
▪ Toughness Rating	Devon 4

Please see the notes on Toughness Ratings at the end of this report

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CHALLENGE ?**

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**Full Info from the Great Walks web site**

## THE ROUTE

The walk starts from a car park just south of Burrator Reservoir.

From the car park entrance, **S**, turn left along the road to Burrator Dam and then keep the reservoir to your right as you walk the woody road above its bank. Soon you reach a gate and stile on your left at **A**, taking the path leading down into woodland. Follow the clear path, which bears left then turns right across a narrow castellated bridge and crosses a grassy area. From here the path leads through the woodland and keeps close to the reservoir's edge. There are occasional views across the water to Sheeps Tor. When the path divides, keep to the route alongside the reservoir. The path gradually moves away from the water and a weir is passed on the right; shortly the path ends at a stile onto a minor road. Turn right to cross Norsworthy Bridge and go straight ahead onto the stony track, **B**.

Follow the right hand track and begin a gradual climb. To the right of this track will be seen Down Tor and Combshead Tor with a wonderful view back over Burrator reservoir and across to Sheeps Tor. Ruined farm buildings lie to the right of the track and the field enclosure walls still remain. The track, known as the Monks' Path, soon arrives at the open moor and as the plantation is left behind look to the left on the horizon to see Crazy Well Cross, one of three crosses which will be seen on this walk. The track is bordered by gorse and heather, with low growing plants such as tormentil adding colour. Stonechats, skylarks and wheatears (summer visitors) can be seen and heard across the moorland.

Newleycombe cross is reached on the right; the views from here are of Down Tor, with Sheeps Tor behind to the south-west, west-south-west is Leather Tor with Sharpitor to its right. Cramber Tor is to the north and Crazy Well Cross lies to the west, on the other side of the track. Older Bridge, at **C**, which consists of four granite slabs laid flat, is crossed and shortly the path bears right across the moorland to join a stony track, known as the Abbots' Way. Turn right along this track, passing boundary stones with PCWW 1917 incised into the granite; these relate to the Plymouth Corporation Water Works, which purchased the Burrator catchment area in 1917. Nun's Cross (or Seward's Cross) and Nun's Cross Farmhouse are soon reached on the good clear path. Climb gradually away from Nun's Cross and look back to enjoy a breathtaking view – Devonport Leat can be seen winding its way across the moor.

The Eylesbarrow Tin Mine ruins are reached and it is advisable to keep to the designated paths, as there are hidden hazards in the hollows and mounds, which are densely covered by bilberry plants. Continue along the track and once more Sheeps Tor, Down Tor and Combshead Tor are seen on the right. When the path forks left at **D**, leave the stony track and follow the grassy track on a south westerly course, passing more ruins.

Straight ahead can be seen the River Plym and to the left are the standing stones at Thrushel Combe (marked as Drizzlecombe on the map, which is a vernacular corruption). Cross a small stream and shortly after passing Whittenknowles Rocks on the right a junction, **E**, is reached with a path running roughly east to west. Turn left to visit the three standing stones and associated stone rows. The largest of these standing stones is approximately 4.3 metres tall; just beyond the stone rows is the Giant's Basin – a dish shaped cairn (burial place).

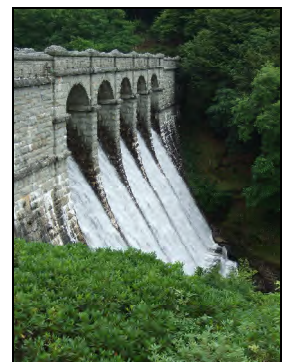
Return to **E**, and follow the distinct path to Ditsworthy Warren House with the River Plym keeping company to the left. Follow the path around the house to take the path initially leading west, then moving to north-west and climbing Ringmoor Down. A gate **G** is reached with a signpost indicating Public Bridle-path to road and Ringmoor Cottage.



The Burrator Reservoir



Nun's Cross  
Also known as Seward's Cross



The Burrator Dam

The path continues in the same direction and there are poles marking the way across the Down. There are dramatic views to the left of the china-clay workings on Lee Moor. At the end of the Down a view opens over Meavy and Dousland. Go through the gate and bear slightly left to descend to a minor road, with Ringmoor Cottage being immediately on the left. Turn right onto Portland Lane at **H**. Shortly Burrator Reservoir is seen to the left, with Sharpitor and Leather Tor rising behind it and then St Leonard's church at Sheepstor is ahead. Descend to a Public Footpath on the left to Marchant's Cross, which is the return route, **I**. To visit St Leonard's church go straight on.

From **I**, follow the track into a field and walk diagonally across the field to go through the second gate on the left. Keep the hedge right to a stile over a wall, turn right to another stile and a third stile leads into Burrator Wood. Follow the narrow path to a ladder stile into a lane. Turn right down the lane and follow the indicated path down to Yeo House. Turn left along the driveway to arrive at Marchant's Cross and turn right down the road to Meavy. The next turning on the left leads to the village green with the Royal Oak and St Peter's church adjacent. To return to Burrator take the footpath **J** through a field and follow the track upwards into woodland. The dry channel of the 16<sup>th</sup> century Plymouth Leat will be passed on the left; this construction supplied Plymouth (17 miles away) with its water supply before the reservoir was built. Continue upwards when the way divides and at the road turn left to the parking area, **S**.

### Refreshment

The Royal Oak  
Public House  
Meavy  
Pub offering snacks and  
meals



The Royal Oak

## LOCAL INFO

**Burrator Reservoir** was built in 1908 and the dam raised 20 years later; about 12 farms in total which came within the catchment area of the reservoir were evacuated as the land within this area is not permitted to be farmed. As a result of this the surrounding slopes were planted with conifers.

The remote Nun's Cross Farm was enclosed in around 1870 but the farmhouse seen today replaced the original thatched cottage; it is no longer a farm but used as a training centre.

**Eylesbarrow Tin Mine** operated intermittently from the 12<sup>th</sup> century to the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century. Its most prosperous period was from 1815 – 1830. In its day it produced high quality tin and all the processes were carried out using water power taken from the River Plym via a leat. There are a number of ruined buildings visible still, mainly consisting of low walls and floors.

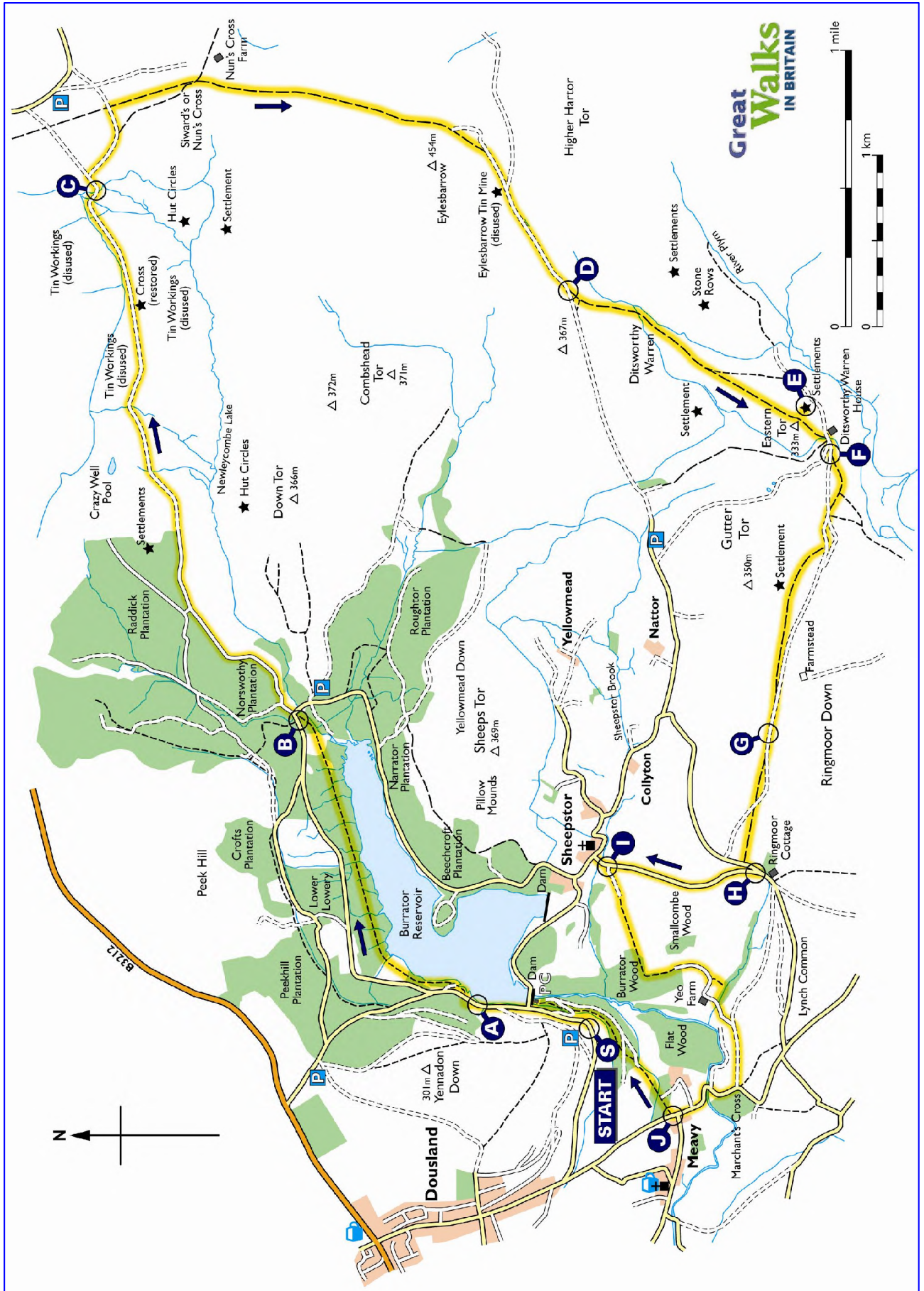
**Ditsworthy Warren House** is around 400 years old. Warrens for the farming of rabbits for meat were set up on Dartmoor during the 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> centuries – Ditsworthy being the largest. It ceased operating as a Warren House in the 1950's when myxomatosis caused it to close. Its most notable feature is its water supply (taken from a leat) which literally runs through the house.

St Leonard's Church at Sheepstor contains much of interest. Over the porch door is a sundial, dating from 1640, in the form of a skull with corn growing from it – this symbolises life after death. The initials J.E. relate to John Elford, who was the Lord of the Manor of Longstone in the 17<sup>th</sup> century. The ruins of the house can still be seen on the eastern shore of the reservoir. The church contains a 15<sup>th</sup> century font and the pews display some fine carvings. The story of the 'White Rajahs of Sarawak' will be found in the church and their graves are on the east side of the church, surrounded by railings bearing their Coat of Arms. Sir James Brooke lies under a large slab of red Aberdeen granite, while his nephew Sir Charles Brooke rests under a large boulder of Dartmoor granite. Memorial tablets to family members are adjacent to these graves.

Meavy's oak tree is thought to be around 900 years old with a circumference of approximately 6.5metres. The 15<sup>th</sup> century church is dedicated to St Peter. In the churchyard, close to the Chancel wall is a slate tombstone which commemorates Tregillgus, the village blacksmith in a rhyming epitaph.

**BURRATOR RESERVOIR  
TO DITSWORTHY WARREN  
G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF		CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
BUR S	S	SX	54952	67708	264
BUR A	A	SX	55157	68349	154
BUR B	B	SX	56804	69393	291
BUR C	C	SX	59822	70563	392
BUR D	D	SX	59258	67803	373
BUR E	E	SX	58724	66497	303
BUR F	F	SX	58370	66281	313
BUR G	G	SX	56745	66622	315
BUR H	H	SX	55845	66675	270
BUR I	I	SX	55891	67560	224
BUR J	J	SX	54444	67222	216



MAP LEGEND					
	Great Walks route		Church with tower		Spot height - metres
	M6 Motorway		Church with spire		Information centre
	A23 Main road		Other place of worship		Parking
	B2116 Secondary road		Cathedral / Abbey		Public convenience
	Minor road		Building		Public house
	Other road		Built up area		Picnic site
	Track		Woodland		Camp site
	Footpath		Sand, shingle or mud		Major tourist feature
	Bridleway		Water feature		Other tourist feature
	National trail				
	Railway				

## Safety First

**Safety should always** be your first priority in planning and undertaking a walk, whether on your own or leading a group. Please read these Safety First and Walking Our Routes notes.

**Lead a group** of other walkers only if you have leadership and navigational experience adequate for the 'worst case' conditions which may be encountered on the particular walk, bearing in mind the terrain, possible weather and navigational demands.

**Weigh up the capabilities** of your party, in terms of fitness and walking speed. Adjust your time expectations accordingly.

**Ensure** all your party are adequately clothed for the weather and conditions. Footwear is particularly important. Clothing must protect against cold, wet or strong sun according to the time of year.

**Emergencies** are quite rare, but it is essential to think ahead about what to do if someone in your party sustains an injury. Will you have a First Aid kit? Is there a qualified First Aider in the party? How could help be summoned in a serious eventuality?

**Refreshment**, particularly water, can be vital. Dehydration in hot summer conditions can be rapid, and frequent intake of fluids is essential.

**On tougher walks** it is a good idea to tell someone where you are planning to go – and when you expect to be back. Remember - mobile phones often lose reception in mountainous or isolated areas.

**All our walks use legitimate routes:** Public Rights of Way, Public Footpaths, Bridleways, Permissive Paths, Access Land, Byways and Roads.

**Road** walking calls for particular care. When there is no defined footpath or verge wide enough for safe walking it is usually best to walk on the right – facing oncoming traffic. An exception may be a tight bend, where walkers would be more visible on the left.

**Occasionally** you may find a public footpath blocked or unuseable. It is perfectly in order to take the shortest available diversion without damaging crops, perhaps around a field margin.

**It is courteous** to close gates after passing through, sometimes even if the gate was open when you arrived – particularly if it is obvious livestock may escape.

**Mutual respect** for farm animals is to be encouraged! Don't frighten or annoy them, but equally don't put your party members in danger or discomfort. You certainly wouldn't be the first walkers to go round the outside of a field of frisky bullocks.

**Dogs** should always be kept on a lead anywhere near farm animals, and under close supervision elsewhere in the countryside.

## Walking Our Routes

**Our walks** are designed to be negotiated using the route directions in conjunction with the map section provided. We suggest walkers also take the Ordnance Survey Explorer or Outdoor Leisure map recommended for each walk.

**On mountain, moorland and open heathland** walks it is **ESSENTIAL** to have navigational expertise and tools, including the recommended Ordnance Survey map(s).

**Take care** to observe any cautions in the route description; exposed paths, areas liable to flooding etc.

**Consider conditions before setting off.** Will heavy rain have made a water meadow impassable? Will frost or snow make a path slippery?

**When navigating the route** look for clues to confirm you are in the right place. Are map features where you would expect on the ground? Are features mentioned in the text where expected? If you suspect you may have taken a wrong turn, take action sooner rather than later. It is better to re-trace to a known point rather than carry on regardless with the possibility of becoming increasingly confused.

**All our routes are carefully checked** before publication, but features can change on the ground – sometimes surprisingly quickly. Footpaths may be re-routed, buildings can appear or change significantly and these days pub names seem to change frequently.

**The approximate time** given for each walk is based on an average walking speed of 2.5 miles per hour (4 km/hour), plus an allowance for ascent, descent and any difficult terrain.

**Total ascent** is the approximate total ascent over the whole walk.

**GPS users** can enter in the waypoints provided in each of our walk reports. It is important to read our guide **Introducing GPS for Walkers**, available as a PDF file from the Great Walks in Britain web site.

**Remember that GPS** is a great navigational tool, but only one of those available to the navigator. Never dispense with conventional map and compass – and the training and skills to use them, especially on mountain, moorland or open heathland walks.

### TOUGHNESS RATINGS

Most of our **Devon & Dartmoor** routes can be undertaken by reasonably fit walkers able to utilise the map segments and our recommended Ordnance Survey maps, together with the route guidance notes.

The toughest walks should be undertaken or led only by experienced mountain walkers with navigational expertise. Always consider recent and forecast weather.

Each walk has been allocated a **Toughness Rating**:

1. Easier walks with modest ascent and generally on well defined paths. There may be stiles or narrow gateways to negotiate.
2. Routes which are more demanding. They may include more ascent and possibly paths which are looser or more difficult underfoot.
3. More strenuous walks. There may be prolonged steep ascents, and perhaps several ascents over the whole walk. Conditions may be challenging underfoot.
4. The toughest walks, requiring considerable fitness and navigational experience. There may be prolonged steep ascents. The ability to navigate by compass may be essential.

Toughness Ratings are allocated in the context of the terrain in the edition area. For example a walk rated as demanding in Cambridgeshire may be equivalent to an easier or moderate route in Devon & Dartmoor