



## **Dartmoor's New Bridge To Chalk Ford**

A varied walk within the Dartmoor National Park, with woodland and field paths, stony tracks and quiet country lanes; some steep ascent

### **Essential Facts**

- Route distance: 13.5 km (8.5 miles)
- Approximate time: 4 hours 15 mins
- Approx. total ascent: 235 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SX 710 709
- GPS Ref: SX 71096 70901
- Recommended O.S. Map: OL 28
- Toughness Rating: Devon 3

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 car park is approximately 4 miles from Ashburton on the main route across Dartmoor. From the car park, **S**, adjacent to New Bridge, where the Dartmoor National Park Information caravan is sited, cross New Bridge and immediately turn right through a large lay-by. Cross the wooden footbridge to enter the National Trust Cleave Wood and follow the path alongside the River Dart. In springtime the woodland floor is colourful with primroses, violets and bluebells. When the path divides, fork left to ascend the path indicated to Holne.

Over a stile into a field, keep along the top of the field to a stile on the left, **A**. Walk through the stand of oak trees ahead to another stile and from here make for the far right hand corner of the field to a stile and narrow path. At the end of this path, turn left along the road to Butts Cross. Turn right to descend to Holne village centre. At the junction, cross to pass the Church House Inn and church on the right.

Follow this road to Play Cross, where bear left to Scorrison. Pass Littlecombe Farm and at the next junction keep left and shortly the granite Jubilee seat is reached. Cross the bridge over the Holy Brook and ascend to Scorrison. On passing the Methodist church, notice the inscribed stones set into the base of the wall – these are the names of local benefactors. Take the next turning on the right, **B**, indicated as Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles; the lane is initially surfaced but becomes stony. At a gate across the path, continue straight on for Chalk Ford and Lud Gate. Cross the wooden footbridge over the River Mardle and ascend the path away from Chalk Ford, climbing to the open moor; the way is indicated Lud Gate for Cross Furzes and follows a southerly course. Bear slightly right away from the fence on climbing to join a wide grassy track.

Keep on a southerly course across the moorland and eventually an enclosure wall and fence join the track on the left. Make for the group of conifer trees which will be seen slightly to the left of the path and a gate, **C**, is reached onto a wide stony track indicated Public Bridlepath Cross Furzes and Footpath to Higher Combe. Keep on this track to Strole, where turn left onto a wide track to walk towards a barn, turning right through a small gate, **D**, into a field. Turn left through the gate and keep the hedge to the left to reach a further small gate into another field. The path gradually veers right across the corner of this field and Scae Wood is to the left. Follow a north-easterly course until a yellow way-marker is seen on a post; descend beside a line of trees and keep on this path to exit into the field, where a gate and stile, **E**, will be seen straight ahead.

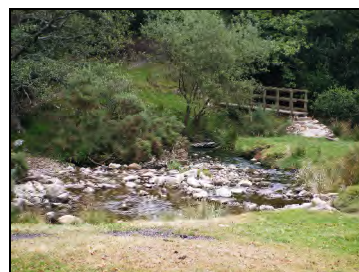
A stony track descends between high banks populated with abundant mosses and hard fern, with Scae Wood to the left and Lakemoor Wood to the right; the River Mardle may also be heard rushing on its way after heavy rains. At Higher Combe turn right along the lane after the Great Oak and at the T-junction turn left along the road to Holne. Cross Combe Bridge and ascend to a T-junction, where turn left (indicated to Michelcombe) and on entering Scorrison, turn right (Rosemary Lane) opposite the War Memorial seats, **F**. At the next T-junction turn left to Holne and cross the River Mardle once again. Shortly a track is reached on the left, **G**, known as Langaford Steep, and indicated as Unsuitable for Motor Vehicles; this leads straight back to the edge of Holne village. At the top of the track, bear right and at Play Cross turn left. Pass a number of properties and when a turning is seen on the left, turn right up steps **H** immediately before the turning; the steps and gate maybe slightly concealed by vegetation. The path leads to a field and the church is seen ahead. Go through the kissing-gate (right) into the churchyard and return to the road from the church.



St Mary's Church  
Holne



Jubilee Bench



Chalk Ford & Footbridge

Turn left from the main gate to the church and pass the Church House Inn. At the junction, cross over and ascend to Butts Cross, turning left and then right onto the path to New Bridge. Follow the outward route to return through the fields and along the path beside the River Dart. Turn left over New Bridge to the car park, **S**.

### Refreshment

The Church House Inn  
Public House &  
Restaurant  
Holne  
Tel: 01364 631208  
Lunches & Dinners; Real  
Ales; Wines; Cider.

Holne Tea Rooms  
Tea Rooms  
Holne  
Tel: 01364 631135  
Cream Teas; Home  
cooked food.



The Church House Inn

## LOCAL INFO

New Bridge dates from the early 15<sup>th</sup> century and seems to have been a completely new bridge at that point over the River Dart. Originally the entrance to the bridge was narrower and there was a Moorgate across the road by the bridge to prevent stock straying from the moor – this is now replaced by a cattle grid. During WWII, in order to prevent heavy military vehicles damaging the bridge, a Bailey bridge (constructed of wooden planks and steel girders) was put across the river just up stream.

Holne is a small, attractive village. It is famous for being the birthplace of the author Charles Kingsley, who wrote *The Water Babies*, *Westward Ho!* and *Hereward the Wake*. Charles Kingsley was born at the Vicarage, Holne, on 12<sup>th</sup> June 1819, whilst his father was Curate in Charge here; he was baptised in the church.

St Mary's church is small but of interest, dating from the 13<sup>th</sup> century with 15<sup>th</sup> century additions. The stained glass north window is a memorial to Charles Kingsley, placed here in 1894. The painted screen depicts forty figures of apostles, evangelists and other saints along its base and the top is ornately carved with wheat and grapes, with birds eating the grapes. In the churchyard, by the main door, stands the Dole Stone which was formerly used for dispensing charity. Buried in the churchyard is Edward Collins, one-time landlord of the Church House Inn, who died in December 1780. The wording on the gravestone is no longer decipherable, but apparently reads: Here lies poor old Ned

On his last mattress bed  
During life he was honest and free;  
He knew well the chace  
But has now run his race  
And his name was COLLINS D'ye see

..... Dec'r 1780 Aged 77

The Church House Inn takes its name from the time when it would have brewed its own beer for church festivals and provided accommodation and refreshment for those attending church from some distance away. It dates from 1329 and it is reputed that Oliver Cromwell once stayed here.

**DARTMOOR'S NEW BRIDGE  
TO CHALK FORD  
G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF		CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
NEW S	S	SX	71096	70901	96
NEW A	A	SX	70865	69983	143
NEW B	B	SX	70408	68523	122
NEW C	C	SX	68436	67342	333
NEW D	D	SX	68896	67355	311
NEW E	E	SX	69458	67818	209
NEW F	F	SX	70402	68485	136
NEW G	G	SX	70754	68664	111
NEW H	H	SX	70460	69397	197



**Great Walks**  
IN BRITAIN

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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