



Postbridge to Laughter Tor and Dartmeet

Moorland walking - offering excellent views. Stepping-stones to be crossed and some wet areas of moorland to be negotiated. Antiquarian remains are visited along the route

Essential Facts

- Route distance: 19.5 km (12.2 miles)
- Approximate time: 5 hours
- Approx. total ascent: 240 metres
- Start point Grid Ref: SX 646 788
- GPS Ref: SX 64664 78854
- Recommended O.S. Map: O.L. 28
- Toughness Rating: Devon & Dartmoor 4

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

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CHALLENGE ?**

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THE ROUTE

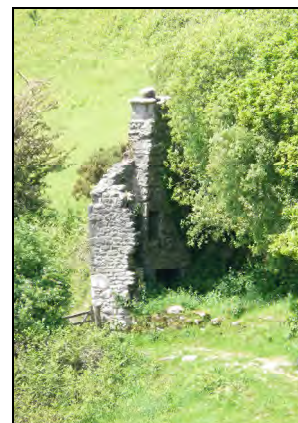
The walk starts from the car park at the Visitor Centre on the B3212 at Postbridge.

From the car park, **S**, Turn left along the road to cross the road bridge, which gives a good view of the old clapper bridge. Shortly turn right, onto the bridle-path signed for to Lydgate and Pizwell. Pass the Lydgate House Hotel and at a gate into a field walk straight ahead on a well-defined path through fields. The path climbs slightly and then turns right (signposted), keeping the hedge to the left. At a metal gate the field path becomes a wide track; pass through another gate and negotiate the spring-fed stream. The track turns left onto a bridle-path to Pizwell and leads through a gate to descend between the Pizwell Farm buildings; in 1260 Pizwell was referred to as a village, but the name was then Pishull. Go straight on to the ford, which must be crossed via the stepping-stones when the water is flowing deep and fast. To the left is Soussons Plantation and there are views to the right. Amongst the gorse and grass can be seen lousewort - a semi-parasitic plant on grasses and sedges, bearing rose pink flowers. An extract of this plant was once used against animal lice, hence its name.

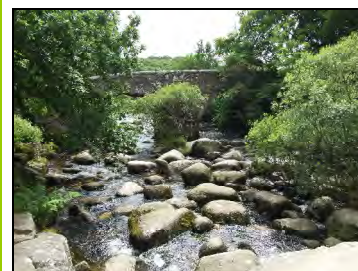
Gates are reached on the right at **A**, where a bridlepath leads across Cator Common. The track is fairly obvious for much of the way, but a southerly course will lead to a gate and a minor road. Turn left along the road passing a small clump of beech trees left and enjoy marvellous views to the right. Pass a turning to Cator Court at Cator Green and shortly pass between two granite gateposts. Where the road bends to the left go straight ahead onto Corndon Down, **B**, and using the wall to the right as a guide, follow a south-westerly course initially, then south along the line of the wall and eventually a track leads to the road at Sherwell (pronounced Sherrill). There are again wonderful views from this height. Turn right along the road for about 100 metres to the footpath over a ladder-stile to Yartor Down, **C**; keep to the left-hand side of the field and in the next field, where ragged robin enjoys the damp conditions, keep to the worn path leading to the wooden footbridge over the stream. Climb away from the bridge to a small gate into a field and with the hedge right and Yar Tor ahead continue to a stile onto Yar Tor Down. From here there are views back to Sherwell and to the right are the plantations of Snider Park and Little Newtake.

The path may be lost in undergrowth during the late spring and summer, but bear slightly right and set a south-westerly course between 220° and 240° to descend. A ruined building will be seen on the opposite bank of the river below – this is Dolly's Cott. Make for the grassy area and turn left. A pleasant walk alongside the East Dart River leads past the Badgers Holt Tearooms and into a parking area, then beside the river again to reach the old clapper bridge and the 1792 road bridge. At the road turn right over the bridge and then left across a forecourt onto the footpath at **D**, indicated to Combestone and Huccaby. Bear right through the gate onto the path to Huccaby and climb the field to cross a small stream to the left and through a small gate turn right up the stony path. Keep on this path to a stile and then a gate; cross a field where the way is marked by yellow markers. At the gate turn right onto a grassy track leading to a minor road. Go ahead to Hexworthy Cross and turn left along the narrow path running parallel with the road; this patch of ground is host to a wealth of bluebells in spring.

Cross the road and pass Huccaby Tor Cottage; at the small gate just past the Cottage take the bridle-path on the right, **E**.



**Dolly's Cottage
Dartmeet**



**The River Dart
Dartmeet**



**Dartmoor Ponies
Grazing Free**

Follow the path straight ahead (north) keeping Snider Park Plantation to the right. At the next gate bear left onto a north-westerly course across the moorland, keeping Huccaby Tor to the left. As a guide the conifer trees at Bellever Forest will be seen to the right and Laughter Tor will be on the horizon. When the enclosure wall around Laughter Tor is clearly seen, so the standing stone known as Laughter Man should also be visible; aim for this stone which has a height of about 2.5 metres.

From Laughter Man, at **F**, look up towards Laughter Tor (a corruption of Lough Tor) to see a large rectangular enclosure built of granite, known as Lough Tor Pound; although giving the impression of being a ruined building this is in fact a Sheepfold or Sheep Measure and the entrance to it is on the Tor side. The capacity of the fold was known, so that when it was full, the number of sheep was known without counting them! Continue along the path ahead from Laughter Man to an enclosure wall and a gate. Turn right through the gate and ascend to Bellever Tor. Growing around the scattered rocks below this Tor will be found bilberries or whortleberries in great abundance.

Go straight over the top of Bellever Tor, keeping the trig point to the right, to descend the wide track the other side. There are good views all round from this summit and Princetown and North Hessary Tor with its transmitter mast can be clearly seen. Walk straight ahead onto Lakehead Hill with plantation to right and left.

Continue as far as **G**, where a path leads to the right and a fenced area with a stile giving access. Here there is a kistvaen and stone row. Walk past these relics to exit the area over a further stile and go straight ahead to a wide stony track. Turn left along the track and follow this back to a gate into a parking area. Bear right to a cattle grid and gate and turn right along the road to return to the car park and information centre, **S**.

Refreshment

East Dart Hotel	Brimpts Farm
Public House	Traditional Farmhouse
Postbridge	Tearooms
Hotel and pub with food	Dartmeet
	Tel: 01364-631450
Badgers Holt	Seasonal opening;
Tearooms	clotted cream teas;
Dartmeet	families welcome.
Tel: 01364-631213	
Teas, coffee, snacks	

LOCAL INFO

Postbridge is probably best known for its clapper bridge, which is the largest and best example of its kind found on the moor. It is thought that it was built in medieval times to replace stepping stones, thus allowing pack-horses to cross the River Dart when the water level was too high to ford. Extensive work was carried out in 1975 to ensure its survival, with care being taken not to alter its appearance. There is documentary evidence to show that, in 1675 this bridge formed part of a track system running from Exeter to Truro.

Dolly's Cott ruin will be seen from Yar Tor Down on the approach to Dartmeet. There is now just one wall standing, that with the chimney and fireplaces, which has been colonised with vegetation.



The Ruined Bridge
Dartmeet



East Dart Hotel

The story attaching to this cottage is that it was built during the 18th century by a gentleman for his newly-wed wife Dolly. She was apparently an attractive woman who was greatly admired – more than he cared for – and he wished to place her out of reach of these admirers.

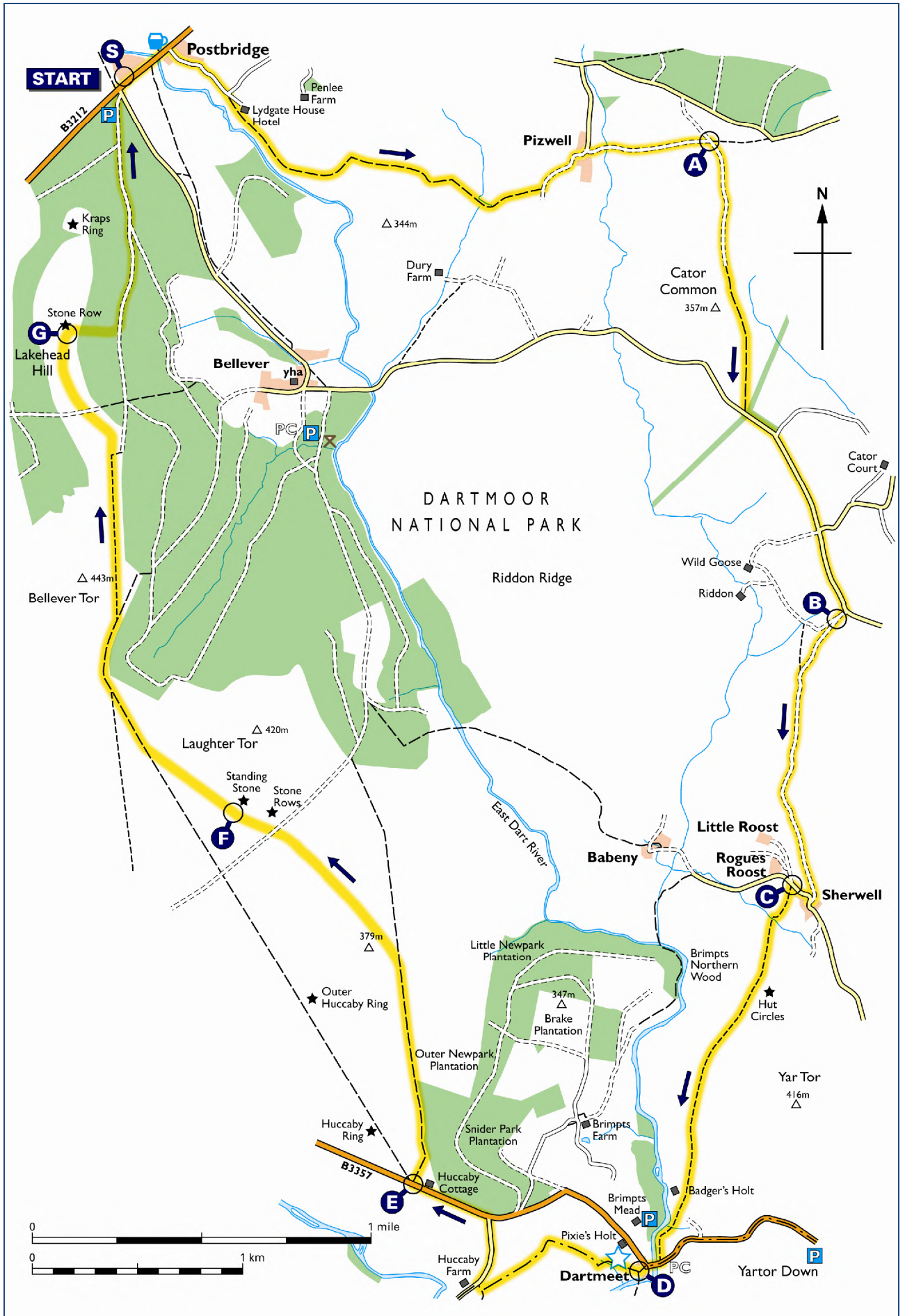
Dartmeet obtains its name from the fact that the East Dart river, which flows past Badgers Holt, joins with the West Dart just beyond the road bridge.


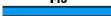



























The now incomplete clapper bridge seen at Dartmeet was washed away in 1826, when a torrent of water carried a tree downriver; this formed a dam and the consequent surge of water created behind it smashed into the structure. It was rebuilt but since that time the stones have again been displaced.

Bellever Tor is composed of some particularly attractive rock formations. Due to the actions of the weather over millions of years since the rock was created, the remaining granite now has the appearance of having been created in layers. The area around the Tor contains some prehistoric remains in the form of hut circles (the remains of the circular dwellings built by the primitive inhabitants of the moor), stone rows (rows of stones placed a few feet apart, some stretching for considerable distances and often associated with burial sites), cairns (ancient stone heaps marking interments) and kistvaens (stone coffins – from the Celtic *cist* meaning chest and *maen* stone), although sadly many were destroyed in the 19th century by a farmer intent on cultivating the land. On Lakehead Hill those sites remaining are marked by numbered posts; some sites being very close to the edge of the plantation and not easy to locate when the vegetation is high. A kistvaen and stone row are seen on the return route to Postbridge.

**POSTBRIDGE TO LAUGHTER TOR
AND DARTMEET
G.P.S. WAYPOINTS**

WAYPOINT NAME	MAP REF	CO-ORDINATES		ELEVATION: Metres
POS S	S	SX 64664	78854	320
POS A	A	SX 67457	78520	351
POS B	B	SX 68091	76278	338
POS C	C	SX 67832	74987	313
POS D	D	SX 67135	73167	236
POS E	E	SX 66035	73589	300
POS F	F	SX 65232	75363	397
POS G	G	SX 64651	77617	423



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