



About the Author

As soon as she could after leaving Exeter University, Sue grabbed the chance to return to Devon, where she spent 20 years commissioning walking, equestrian and countryside books for David & Charles Publishers. She started writing her first walking book three weeks after going freelance in 2000 and since then has written or contributed to around twenty books (and edited dozens more), specialising in her home territory of south-west England, especially Dartmoor and Exmoor. She writes the walks for *Exmoor: the country magazine*, and since 2008 has been editor (and is now co-owner) of *Dartmoor Magazine*. Sue is a member of the Dartmoor Local Access Forum, and Information Officer for the Two Moors Way Association.

Further afield she has walked across Corsica; in Madeira, the Canaries and the Balearics; scrambled in Snowdonia and the Scottish Highlands; scaled the heights of Skye's Cuillin and Morocco's Atlas Mountains. She has also trekked to Everest Base Camp and in the Kangchenjunga region of Nepal, and explored the fascinating high-plateau landscapes of Upper Mustang. Lately she has turned her attention to islands closer to home: Lundy, Orkney, Shetland, and Scotland's Inner and Outer Hebrides. Her first love, however, will always be the rolling green hills and atmospheric moorland of Devon, where she has lived for almost forty years.

THE TWO MOORS WAY

**DEVON'S COAST TO COAST:
WEMBURY BAY TO LYNMOUTH**

by Sue Viccars

CICERONE

JUNIPER HOUSE, MURLEY MOSS,
OXENHOLME ROAD, KENDAL, CUMBRIA LA9 7RL
www.cicerone.co.uk

© Sue Viccars 2019
Second edition 2019
ISBN: 978 1 85284 991 7
First edition 2015

Printed in China on behalf of Latitude Press Ltd
A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.
All photographs are by the author unless otherwise stated.



© Crown copyright 2019 OS PU100012932

Dedication

For my boys, who love Devon too

Acknowledgements

Thank you as ever to all who have helped and kept me company on my various ramblings (both on foot and verbal): to Brenda, Emma, Jackie and Stuart. Many thanks to all those involved in keeping Devon's Coast to Coast walk 'on track': fellow members of the Two Moors Way Association, and representatives from Exmoor National Park Authority, Dartmoor National Park Authority and Devon County Council. And thank you to Cicerone Press for publishing this revised and expanded edition of the guidebook.

Front cover: Looking towards Dartmoor from fields near Morchard Bishop (walking north to south)

CONTENTS

Map key	6
Overview map	7
Route summary table	8–9
Trek planner	10–11
INTRODUCTION	13
History of the route	14
Geology and landscape	16
Wildlife	20
When to go	24
Planning the walk	27
Accommodation	28
Public transport	30
Maps	30
Getting there and getting away	30
What to take	34
Food and drink	34
Health and safety	35
Mobile phones and emergencies	37
Waymarking and access	38
Using this guide	39
THE TWO MOORS WAY – DEVON'S COAST TO COAST	43
Stage 1 Wembury to Yealmpton	44
Stage 2 Yealmpton to Ivybridge	55
Stage 3 Ivybridge to Holne	66
Stage 3A Ivybridge to Holne (low-level route)	79
Stage 4 Holne to Dunstone Down	91
Stage 5 Dunstone Down to Chagford Bridge	100
Stage 5A Dunstone Down to Chagford Bridge (low-level route)	115
Stage 6 Chagford Bridge to Morchard Road	126
Stage 7 Morchard Road to Witheridge	141
Stage 8 Witheridge to Knowstone	153
Stage 9 Knowstone to Tarr Steps	161
Stage 10 Tarr Steps to Simonsbath	174
Stage 11 Simonsbath to Lynmouth	183

THE TWO MOORS WAY

Appendix A	Useful contacts	196
Appendix B	Selected accommodation	200
Appendix C	Stamp stations	208
Appendix D	Further reading	209







Updates to this Guide

While every effort is made by our authors to ensure the accuracy of guidebooks as they go to print, changes can occur during the lifetime of an edition. Any updates that we know of for this guide will be on the Cicerone website (www.cicerone.co.uk/991/updates), so please check before planning your trip. We also advise that you check information about such things as transport, accommodation and shops locally. Even rights of way can be altered over time. We are always grateful for information about any discrepancies between a guidebook and the facts on the ground, sent by email to updates@cicerone.co.uk or by post to Cicerone, Juniper House, Murley Moss, Oxenholme Road, Kendal, LA9 7RL.






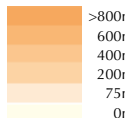
Register your book: To sign up to receive free updates, special offers and GPX files where available, register your book at www.cicerone.co.uk.

Route symbols on OS map extracts

(for OS legend see printed OS maps)

-  route
-  alternative route
-  start point
-  finish point
-  alternative start point
-  alternative start point
-  route direction

Features on the overview map

-  County/Unitary boundary
-  National boundary
-  Urban area
-  National Park
eg **DARTMOOR**
-  Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, eg **Bodmin Moor**
- 
 - >800m
 - 600m
 - 400m
 - 200m
 - 75m
 - 0m

OVERVIEW MAP

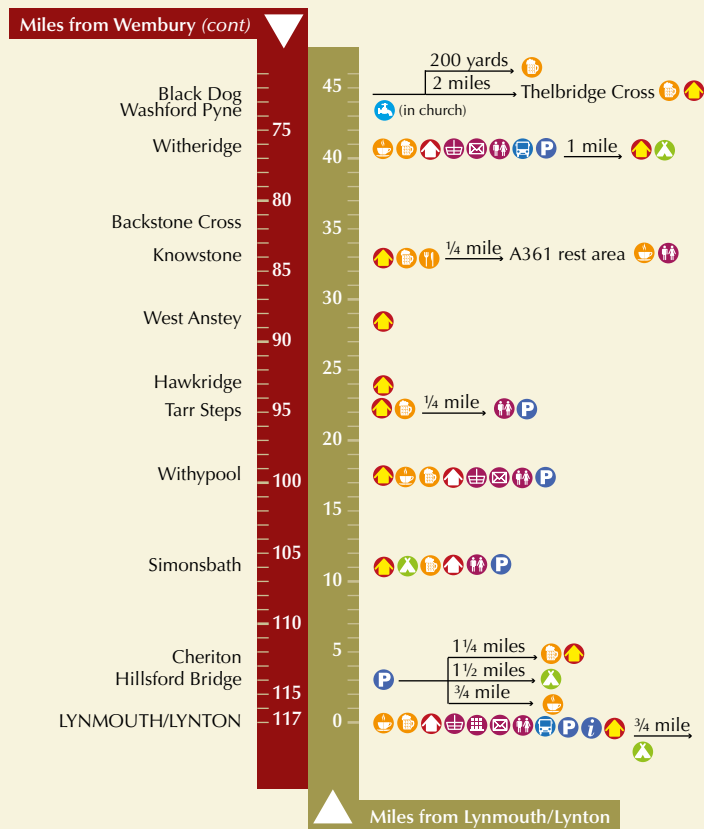
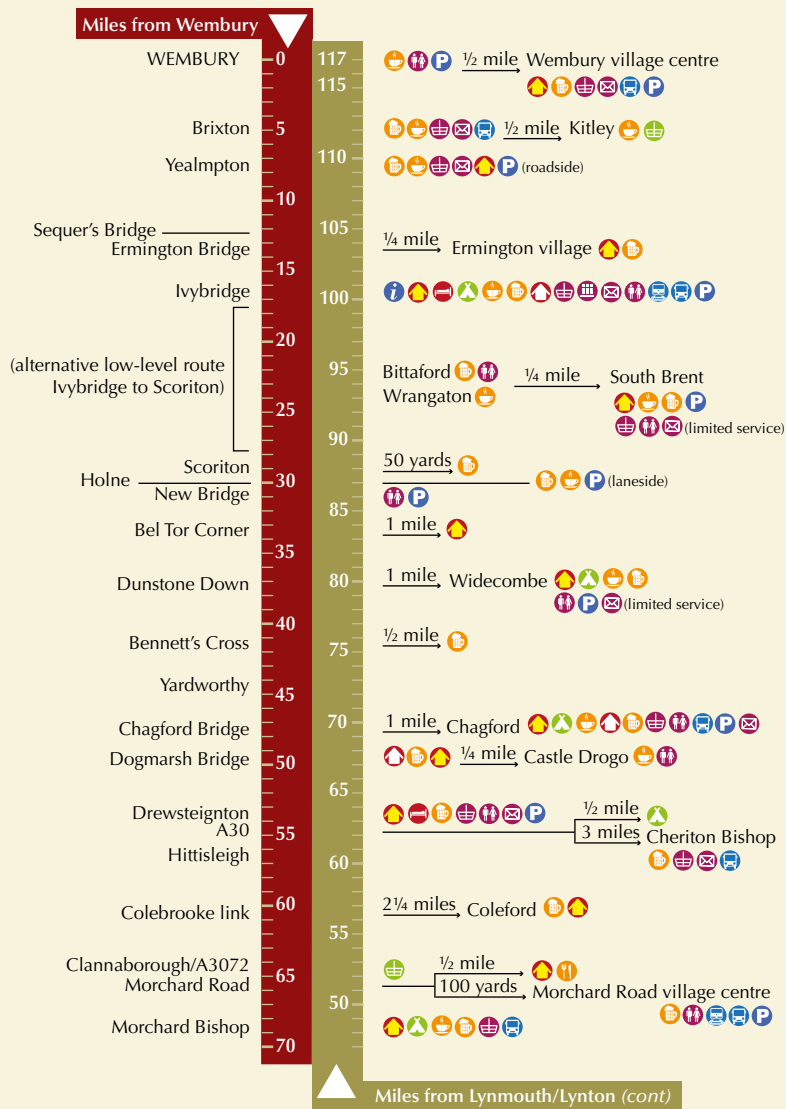


ROUTE SUMMARY TABLE

	Start	Finish	Distance
1	Wembury Beach (SX 517 485)	Yealmpton (SX 579 518)	7½ miles (12km)
2	Yealmpton (SX 579 518)	Ivybridge (SX 637 562)	9 miles (14.5km)
3	Ivybridge (SX 637 562)	Holne (SX 706 695)	13½ miles (21.75km)
3A	Ivybridge (SX 637 562)	Holne (SX 706 695)	16½ miles (26.75km)
4	Holne (SX 706 695)	Dunstone Down (SX 704 759); or Widecombe-in-the-Moor (SX 718 768)	7¼ miles (11.75km); or 9 miles (14.5km)
5	Dunstone Down (SX 704 759); or Widecombe-in-the-Moor (SX 718 768)	Chagford Bridge (SX 694 880)	10½ miles (17km)
5A	Dunstone Down (SX 704 759); or Widecombe-in-the-Moor (SX 718 768)	Chagford Bridge (SX 694 880)	11 miles (17.75km)
6	Chagford Bridge (SX 694 880)	A377 south of Morchard Road (SS 756 043)	18 miles (29km)
7	A377 south of Morchard Road (SS 756 043)	Witheridge (SS 803 145)	10½ miles (17km)
8	Witheridge (SS 803 145)	Knowstone (SS 828 231)	7¾ miles (12.5km)
9	Knowstone (SS 828 231)	Tarr Steps (SS 868 361); or Withypool (SS 846 335)	11 miles (17.75km); or 12¼ miles (19.75km)
10	Tarr Steps (SS 868 361); or Withypool (SS 846 335)	Simonsbath, (SS 774 394)	11 miles (17.75km); or 6½ miles (10.5km)
11	Simonsbath, (SS 774 394)	Lynmouth, The Pavilion on The Esplanade (SS 723 497)	11 miles (17.75km)

Time	Maps	Page
4hr	Explorer OL20 South Devon; Landranger 201 Plymouth & Launceston, 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor	44
4½hr	Explorer OL20 South Devon; Landranger 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor	55
7hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor; Landranger 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	66
7½hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor; Landranger 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor, 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	79
4hr; or 4½hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor; Landranger 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor, 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	91
5½hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor; Landranger 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	100
6hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor; Landranger 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	115
8hr	Explorer OL28 Dartmoor, 113 Okehampton; Landranger 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	126
5½hr	Explorer 113 Okehampton, 127 South Molton & Chulmleigh (tiny stretch), 114 Exeter & the Exe Valley; Landranger 191 Okehampton & North Dartmoor, 181 Minehead & Brendon Hills; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	141
4hr	Explorer 114 Exeter & the Exe Valley; Landranger 181 Minehead & Brendon Hills; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	153
4½hr; or 5¼hr	Explorer 114 Exeter & the Exe Valley, OL9 Exmoor; Landranger 181 Minehead & Brendon Hills; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	161
6hr; or 3hr	Explorer OL9 Exmoor; Landranger 181 Minehead & Brendon Hills, 180 Barnstaple & Ilfracombe; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	174
6hr	Explorer OL9 Exmoor; Landranger 180 Barnstaple & Ilfracombe; Harvey Map Two Moors Way	183

The Two Moors Way Trek Planner



NOTE: Bus services are very limited and/or irregular, and may not operate on Sundays. Post office services may not be available every day.



A beautiful green lane ascends to Weeke (Stage 7)

INTRODUCTION

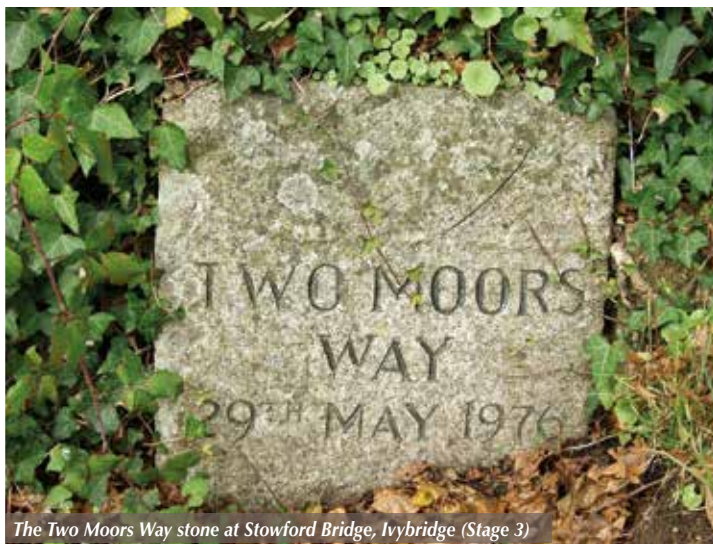
Any long-distance walk from point to point brings with it a special sense of achievement, and a coast-to-coast is even better. Just look at the popularity of such routes as Wainwright's Coast to Coast, devised in the 1970s, from St Bee's Head in Cumbria to Robin Hood's Bay in North Yorkshire, or – more recently – the Hadrian's Wall Path National Trail, from Bowness-on-Solway to Wallsend on the Tyne.

But what about an option further south? A quick glance at the map reveals that England's southwest peninsula is the obvious place to look for a substantial coast-to-coast route, and that the best candidate

for such an expedition is Devon. Not only is this southern England's largest county – allowing for a walk of around 117 miles (188km) – it is also the only one where the south and north coasts are separate and markedly different in character. And, being an essentially rural county and home to two of southwest England's unspoiled, magnificent and greatly contrasting moorlands – the granite heights of Dartmoor in the south, and softer Exmoor in the north – Devon can offer a route that takes walkers far off the beaten track for complete immersion in this most delightful of counties.



The Venton stone overlooks the Dane's Brook valley near Hawkridge, Exmoor (Stage 9)



The Two Moors Way stone at Stowford Bridge, Ivybridge (Stage 3)

Although Devon is undoubtedly a popular tourist destination the vast majority of visitors head for the coastal areas, and Mid Devon is quiet all year round. At Easter time and in the summer holidays 'honeypots' such as New Bridge on Dartmoor and Tarr Steps on Exmoor are thronged with visitors, but these are quickly passed to return to blissful solitude.

HISTORY OF THE ROUTE

The route known as 'Devon's Coast to Coast' is a combination of the well-known Two Moors Way and a section of the more recently established Erme–Plym Trail in South Devon. The creation of the former – a largely

off-road walking route linking the two moors, running right across Dartmoor National Park and passing through the western third of Exmoor – was the inspiration of Joe Turner, original chairman of the Two Moors Way Association. The appeal of Dartmoor and Exmoor for walkers has long been known. Although quite different in character, they both combine open common for a tougher challenge with a good network of lower-level valley rights of way for those wanting a less taxing day out.

The Two Moors Way was officially opened on 29 May 1976. Following Joe's death in 2004, Devon County Council erected two memorial stones on the route as testament to his work.

Dartmoor sculptor Peter Randall-Page's work is known throughout the world, and it is fitting that Joe's commitment should be commemorated in the form of a large worked granite 'boulder', divided in two. One half sits at the edge of the Exmoor section at Badlake Moor Cross alongside an engraved plaque celebrating the vision of Joe '...who created the route for all to enjoy'; its twin is positioned near the sculptor's home outside Drewsteignton, marking the Dartmoor section. These two sculptures face each other across the 30 miles (48km) of remote and rolling countryside that links Devon's two great moors.

In 2005 the Two Moors Way was officially linked with a section of the Erme–Plym Trail to form

Devon's Coast to Coast route, running on to Wembury on the south coast. However, although the complete route has now been up and running for many years, people still tend to talk about it as 'the Two Moors Way – with that extra bit to the sea tacked on'! Hence the title and subtitle of this guidebook – but it is worth noting that the route does not stay entirely within the county bounds. The boundary between Devon and Somerset is crossed at Slade Bridge over the Dane's Brook south of Hawkridge (Stage 9), and Devon not regained until Stage 11.

In 2016 the 40th anniversary of the setting up of the Two Moors Way was marked by a relaunch of the complete Coast to Coast route. Dartmoor



Peter Randall-Page's sculpture at Badlake Moor Cross on Exmoor's southern edge (Stage 9)



'The Walker' on Lynmouth's Esplanade marks the official end (or start!) of the route

and Exmoor National Parks, Devon County Council and the recently revived Two Moors Way Association have worked together (supported by the Heritage Lottery Fund) to promote and publicise the route in its extended form. See www.twomoorsway.org for more information.

GEOLOGY AND LANDSCAPE

Linking the Two Moors Way with the Erme–Plym Trail neatly adds another distinct landscape area to the original route, passing (from south to north) through the South Hams, Dartmoor, Mid Devon and Exmoor.

The South Hams

Starting from beautiful Wembury Bay on Devon's south coast, the first two stages of the route follow footpaths and bridleways through the rolling fields and copses of that part of South Devon known as the South Hams. The name is said to come from the Old English word *hām*, for an enclosed or sheltered space, which is perfectly appropriate: this is a gentle and unchallenging landscape. Geologically speaking, this area – stretching from Torbay in the east to Plymouth in the west – is composed of Devonian slates, sandstones and limestones. Dating from 395 to 345 million years ago, the resulting green and gentle landscape stands in marked contrast to Dartmoor's brooding granite mass, encountered on Stage 3.

Dartmoor

Dartmoor (part of the same granite sheet that outcrops at Bodmin Moor and the West Penwith Moors in Cornwall, and further west in the Isles of Scilly) is essentially a raised plateau, and home to the highest wholly English mountain south of the Peak District. The plateau is tipped up and drops south from its highest point – 2038ft (621m) at High Willhays – in the northwest corner.

Often evocatively described as 'the last wilderness in England' (although in truth the landscape represents thousands of years of interaction between man and nature), the moor

can be a bleak and forbidding place, peppered with bizarrely sculpted granite tors, frequently shrouded in mist or battered by southwesterly gales, and hammered by an annual rainfall of over 90in (2286mm) on the western edge. The combination of high rainfall and thin acidic soil have over the centuries led to the creation of large areas of peat, resulting in extensive blanket bog on upland areas with slow run-off.

Dartmoor has the greatest concentration of Bronze Age sites in the country: the moor is studded with evidence of prehistoric occupation in the form of hut circles, standing stones and ceremonial structures such as stone circles or stone rows, the latter varying in length and consisting of a line of upright stones, many associated with burial kists (chambers). From medieval times tin was worked extensively, and the resulting pits and gullies are still visible today. Myths and legends abound: the witch Vixana, the famous 'Hairy Hands' and the Devil and his terrifying Wish Hounds are still blamed for all manner of strange happenings.

But around the edges of the plateau Dartmoor displays its softer side: sheltered wooded valleys created by sparkling rivers that have cut deeply into the less resistant shales and slates as they tumble off the unyielding granite; beautiful broadleaved woodland; a patchwork of small stone-walled fields and attractive hamlets.

Dartmoor National Park comprises an area of 368 square miles (953km²) the route described here enters the Park on the northern edge of Ivybridge, and leaves it just south of the A30. The High Moor (and extensive patches of blanket bog) is avoided, but the path still rises to 1736ft (532m) at Broad Burrow on Hamel Down (Stage 5). And walkers should note that Dartmoor always has a trick up its sleeve... Whatever the weather, Ivybridge to Holne (Stage 3) is something of a challenge in terms of landscape, distance and – if visibility is poor – navigation! To assist those who doubt their navigation skills, or who face unsuitable weather conditions on the day, an alternative lower-level route for this stage is described (Stage 3A).

Mid Devon

The land that lies between the two great moors – Mid Devon – is little visited by 'outsiders'. Hilly country criss-crossed by a complex network of narrow hedged lanes, scattered farms and hamlets, remote churches, a patchwork of small fields and pockets of woodland, this is 'real' rural Devon, far off the beaten track and untouched by the effects of tourism. Underlying Carboniferous rocks, laid down between 354 and 290 million years ago, support both fertile farmland – where sandstone predominates, resulting in the characteristic red soils seen on Stages 6 and 7 in particular – and damp heathy

grassland where the rocks are rich in shale.

Henry Williamson – author of the classic novel *Tarka the Otter* who lived in North Devon while recuperating after World War I – describes the countryside a little to the west of the route as ‘the country covered by webbed paw, fin, clawed pad and pinion’. His words capture the feel of this landscape perfectly.

Exmoor

Compared with Dartmoor’s harsh granite, Exmoor’s moorland plateau presents an altogether softer option. Folded sedimentary rocks – sandstones and shales, among others – have produced smooth and rounded

slopes, dissected by picturesque rivers running through steep-sided combs (similar to the Welsh *cwm*, meaning ‘valley’). The story is altogether different at the coast: Exmoor’s towering sea cliffs are the highest in England, making for a dramatic end to the walk at Lynmouth. And as on Dartmoor, Exmoor’s highest ground can be a bleak and forbidding place in bad weather.

Although there is evidence of pre-historic activity it is less extensive and less obvious here than on Dartmoor, contributing to the sense of Exmoor being a more ‘civilised’ and ordered place. A greater proportion of the land within the national park boundary is given over to farming, resulting in

an essentially agricultural landscape of small walled fields, historic farmsteads and hamlets. Most Exmoor villages date from Saxon times.

The Two Moors Way crosses the Devonshire end of the national park, which covers 267 square miles (692km²) and extends east to include the Brendon Hills. It passes through part of the former Royal Forest, home to Exmoor ponies and red deer. Many of the characteristic manmade features of the Exmoor landscape – including miles of beautiful beech hedge-bank (see ‘Wildlife’) – were created by the Knight family, who bought the King’s Allotment, the largest part of the Royal Forest, in 1818. The route runs alongside the lovely River Barle

before crossing the watershed – the Chains, rising to 1599ft (487m) at Chains Barrow – near the source of Devon’s great River Exe and passing through the boundary bank of the former Royal Forest. The last section of the walk climbs high above the dramatic wooded valley of the East Lyn before dropping steeply to the finish at Lynmouth, best known for the terrible floods of 1952 when 34 people lost their lives.

The Royal Forests of Dartmoor and Exmoor

The route passes through a part of Exmoor that was designated ‘Royal Forest’ in the 1200s and thereby set aside as a hunting ground for the king.



The magnificent Foreland towers over the sea near Lynmouth (Stage 11)



Washford Woods in late May (Stage 7)

STAGE 1

Wembury to Yealmpton

Start	Wembury Beach (SX 517 485)
Finish	Yealmpton, crossroads on the A379 in village centre (SX 579 518)
Distance	7½ miles (12km)
Time	4hr
Terrain	Rolling fields and wooded valleys
Maps	Explorer OL20 South Devon; Landranger 201 Plymouth & Launceston, 202 Torbay & South Dartmoor
Refreshments	The Old Mill Café, Wembury Beach; The Odd Wheel Inn, Wembury; Brixton Fish and Chips, Just Williams Restaurant, The Foxhound Inn and Speculation Gallery (café), Brixton; Ben's Farm Shop and Café, Kitley (off route); Market Street Café, Village Stores, Rose & Crown pub, The Volunteer pub, shop at Texaco garage (off route), Yealmpton
Public toilets	Wembury (opposite The Old Mill Café)
Public transport	For Wembury: Plymouth–Wembury bus service; for Yealmpton: Plymouth–Dartmouth and Plymouth–Newton Ferrers bus services
Parking	National Trust car park, Wembury Beach (members free); roadside in Yealmpton
Accommodation	Wembury, Kitley, Yealmpton

On a sunny day it's easy to linger a little longer than intended at the lovely beach at Wembury, starting point for Devon's Coast to Coast: it's a stunning stretch of coastline, and the foreshore is of international importance on account of its marine life (note that dogs are not permitted on the beach between 1 May and 30 September). Give yourself enough time to visit the Marine Centre (free entry, seasonal opening); and pick up a pasty from The Old Mill Café to keep you going. But once you've set off on the Erme–Plym Trail all thoughts of coastal walking are soon left behind as a delightful run of sweeping fields and wooded valleys is encountered. Surprisingly early on in the route come far-reaching views towards the southern slopes of Dartmoor and the official start of the Two Moors Way at Ivybridge.

The Erme–Plym Trail is picked up where it leaves the South West Coast Path at the back of Wembury Beach. ►

The **Great Mewstone** sits off Wembury Point and has an interesting story to tell. In 1744 a convicted felon was 'deported' to the island, with his family, for seven years. When he left, his daughter 'Black Joan' decided to stay, only leaving the island when her husband fell off a rock and drowned. The artist JMW Turner immortalised the island in watercolour in around 1813; and the last inhabitant left in 1850. After World War II it was purchased by the War Office, and since 2006 has been owned by the National Trust as a bird colony.

Tear yourself away from the sea and set off inland, almost immediately passing through a gate. The broad path leads upvalley through grasses and wildflowers, eventually bearing right across a stream to reach a small gate onto a lane.

Minehead is signed 424 miles to the west, and Poole 206 miles to the east.

Take time to visit St Werburgh's Church before setting off



The **church of St Werburgh** stands in a prominent position above Wembury Beach; it's worth climbing up there for a look before setting out on your walk. Werburgh was the daughter of Wulfhere, the first Christian King of Mercia. The present building is thought to stand on the site of a Saxon oratory, possibly dating from the 9th century and replaced by a Norman church three centuries later. The early 15th-century tower was used as a navigation landmark by sailors for hundreds of years.

A narrow footpath running along the top of the bank on the right can also be followed – with care.

Turn left to the lane junction and cross Church Road. Continue up a concrete track, on a bridleway which runs to the left of and below a house. Keep ahead on the bridleway (often muddy). ◀ On meeting a deeply banked lane turn left, downhill.

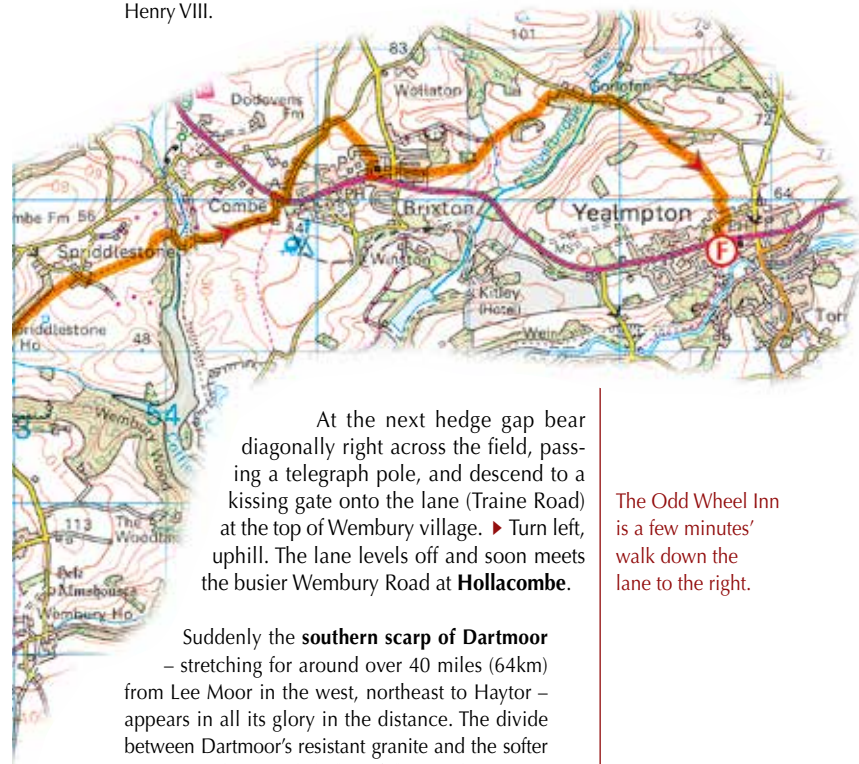
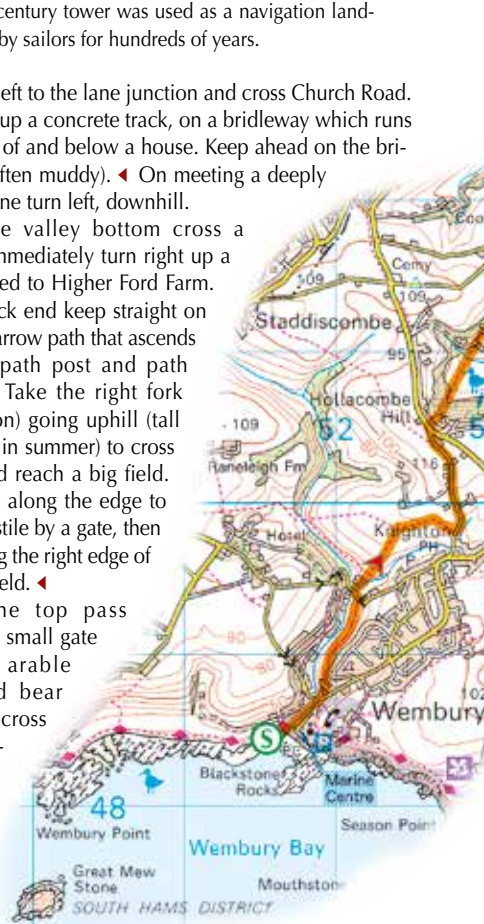
In the valley bottom cross a stream; immediately turn right up a track signed to Higher Ford Farm. At the track end keep straight on along a narrow path that ascends to a footpath post and path junction. Take the right fork (straight on) going uphill (tall foxgloves in summer) to cross a stile and reach a big field. Turn right along the edge to cross a V-stile by a gate, then keep along the right edge of the next field. ◀

At the top pass through a small gate into an arable field and bear half-left across it (in summer a clear strip is left

for walkers) to reach a path junction at an open gateway; keep ahead across the next field.

The substantial 16th-century building seen away to the left from these fields is **Langdon Court Hotel** (one of four manors in the area originally recorded in the Domesday Book). In the mid 16th century the house was given to Catherine Parr, widow of Henry VIII.

Look out for meadow brown butterflies and house martins in high summer.



At the next hedge gap bear diagonally right across the field, passing a telegraph pole, and descend to a kissing gate onto the lane (Traine Road) at the top of Wembury village. ▶ Turn left, uphill. The lane levels off and soon meets the busier Wembury Road at **Hollacombe**.

The Odd Wheel Inn is a few minutes' walk down the lane to the right.

Suddenly the **southern scarp of Dartmoor** – stretching for around over 40 miles (64km) from Lee Moor in the west, northeast to Haytor – appears in all its glory in the distance. The divide between Dartmoor's resistant granite and the softer Devonian slates and shales of the South Hams is clear to see. Butterdon Hill, rising to 1204ft (367m) above Ivybridge, marks the first section of the Two Moors Way proper.

This path is steep,
and very slippery
when wet.

Cross the road and turn left along the pavement. After about 50yds bear right on a footpath, downhill, soon picking up a narrow path past garden sheds and down steps into mature sycamore woodland, carpeted with bluebells in May. ◀ At the bottom continue through Andron Wood, soon crossing a dog-friendly stile into a huge sweeping field below Hollacombe Wood. Walk straight across the field, heading for a stile to the left of farm buildings and passing below **Spriddlestone House**, an elegant Grade II-listed property. An earlier mansion on this site dated from the time of Henry VI and was home until the 18th century to a branch of the wealthy and influential Fortescue family. The level grassy track ahead gives way to a hedged path, emerging via a gate on to a lane junction in the hamlet of **Spriddlestone**.

Turn right past pretty Pine Cottage and Little Spriddlestone Barn. By the next cottage on the right bear left up steps and through a kissing gate. Follow the left field edge, with extensive views across the rolling South Hams countryside.

Go through a gate and keep alongside the hedge, soon bearing right across the field to another gate. Keep along the left edge of the next field; a gate leads onto a

Hayfield near
Spriddlestone in
high summer



Springtime woodland
at Cofflete Creek

fenced path. A metal gate gains a steep flight of steps into beech woodland, above a stream; descend to Brixton Torr, at the head of tidal (and often wet underfoot) Cofflete Creek. Cofflete/Brixton Torr Mill once stood nearby, but was demolished in the 1950s. Note the ford and delightful little stone footbridge, almost overwhelmed by modern road surfacing work. Follow the lane past the footbridge, soon passing under a substantial brick bridge.

The bridge once carried the **Great Western Railway** branch line from Plymouth's Millbay Station to Brixton and Yealmpton, which snaked alongside the creeks of the River Yealm. The line opened in 1898

and closed in 1930, reopening again for six years from 1941 to assist those who had moved out of Plymouth into the countryside during and just after World War II.

Ascend steeply; at a footpath sign bear right up steps and through a gate onto a fenced path which ends at a stone stile and footpath junction; turn left up the lane to reach the A379 at the west end of **Brixton**. Cross the road and turn right, then left up Lodge Lane. Ascend to a crossroads with views towards Lee Moor china clay works on the southern edge of Dartmoor.

Dartmoor's **china clay industry** dates from the 1830s, when significant deposits of kaolin – resulting from the decomposition of feldspar in the granite – were discovered on Lee Moor. Originally used in the production of porcelain (which is why it is known as 'china' clay), today the bulk of what is quarried is used in paper manufacture and also in the ceramic and pharmaceutical industries. The scarred landscape comes as something of a surprise to those unaware of Dartmoor's sole surviving industry: tin mining ended in the early 20th century, and the last commercial granite quarry, Merrivale, closed in 1997 after 121 years of operation.

Turn right; after a few yards turn right through a metal gate and cross the field diagonally. At the far corner a tight kissing gate leads to a narrow path between houses. Cross the road and follow the footpath ahead, descending steps. On reaching Legion Lane turn right downhill, as signed, to meet the A379. Turn left to find St Mary's Church and the Speculation Gallery (shop and café).

The first mention of a **chapel at Brixton** dates from a 1309 register of Exeter's Bishop Stapleton; the present building originates largely from the late



Brixton's war memorial and parish church of St Mary

15th century, with the interior refurbished in the early 19th century. A window in the vestry dates from the 15th century and came from the old Spriddlestone Manor; there is also a Spriddlestone chapel, for the Fortescue family's private worship. There's a rather lovely Victorian lamp post near the church gate marking Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897.

A community path leads downhill right and alongside the A379 to Ben's Farm Shop at Kitley on the edge of Yealmpton.

At the Gallery bear left up Old Road; cross the next road and continue along Woodland Drive, through a housing estate; at the end of the houses a gate leads into fields. ◀ Head across the field and over a stile at the end. In the next large field bear half-left to a woodland corner, then descend steeply into the valley.

Thatched Tapps Lodge, seen across the fields, is one of the lodge gates for 500-year-old **Kitley House**, now a hotel, situated to the south of the A379. The house is thought to have been built in the reign of Henry VIII by Thomas Pollexfen – whose family lived there until 1710 – and remodelled in the early 19th century by George Stanley Repton, youngest son of celebrated landscape designer Sir Humphrey Repton.

Pass through a gate and cross a stile; at a footpath sign turn left to follow the field edge uphill, aiming for a wood. At the top turn left, soon bearing right around the edge of the wood and through a hedge gap. Head across the next field, passing two signed telegraph poles. Turn left and follow the field edge right, as signed, to cross a stile into **Gorlofen Plantation** – with bluebells and wild garlic in May – under sycamore and oak. Descend steps onto a lane.

Turn right, downhill, to cross the Silverbridge Lake (stream), then ascend past pretty, thatched, Gothic-style Gorlofen Lodge, another lodge gate for Kitley House. About 200yds after a lane junction, by a gate, turn right over a stile into a field. Bear left, steeply uphill, passing a footpath post. A kissing gate gains the next field; turn left. At the field end pass through the hedge and along the right edge of the next three fields; houses on the edge of **Yealmpton** come into view.

The next gate gains a track (muddy in wet weather), which leads to a gate/stile then a narrow path to meet a lane; turn right downhill. At Bowden Farm turn left on a footpath, descending steeply. On meeting the A379 turn left. ◀ Pass The Volunteer pub to gain the crossroads

Look out for the Memorial Garden on the opposite side of the road – a good picnic spot – and the church beyond.

Yealmpton's colourful village sign



in the middle of the village, with Noss Mayo/Newton Ferrers signed right.

The sprawling village of **Yealmpton** is well served both by transport links (buses to Plymouth and Dartmouth) and places to eat and drink. Market Street Café has a takeaway menu, and hot drinks are available from the village stores. Take some time to look around St Bartholomew's Church, completely rebuilt (apart from the tower) between 1849 and 1851 and said by poet Sir John Betjeman to be 'the most amazing Victorian church in Devon'. The screen, pillars and altar stone are all made of Kitley marble, quarried in the parish.