

Walking the West Devon Way

Walk 3 Plymbridge to Bickleigh

From Plymbridge the West Devon Way now continues all the way to Goodameavy on the old railway line now a cycle track which is a bit over 4 miles. It does go through a tunnel and over several impressive viaducts but so as you can visit the countryside on either side of the railway the 4 miles of railway track cycle path is split into two walks with Walk 3 only going as far as Bickleigh railway Bridge for a 4.5 mile walk.

Park in either of the car parks at Plymbridge. If you time it you could right park at Marsh Mills where Walk 2 started from and catch a delightful tourist train which is sometimes pulled by a steam engine to Plymbridge Halt. Part way along the cycle track we are going to drop down to the river Plym this is because the path at the Bickleigh railway bridge end down to the river is very steep and extremely slippery if wet and it is much safer to walk up than down. So for a short stretch of the West Devon Way you will be walking back in a southerly direction to do a figure of 8 walk.



The walk starts at the large Plymbridge car park which we walked through on Walk 2.



If you have parked in the quarry car park on the West side of the river Plym walk over the river bridge



and under the railway bridge.



Setting off from the large car park walk up the ramp to reach the cycle track and West Devon Way.



It's a lovely walk along the cycle track but do keep in to the side as the cyclist can get up quite a speed.



When you reach this opening with the bridge in front of you turn right and using the wide track zig zag down the hill. (However it is important that you remember this turning and the bridge in front of you because we are going to return here and go over the bridge on the way back to Plymbridge.)



At the last sharp bend before you reach the meadow take a 10m excursion to your right and have a look at this magnificent quarry face now covered with vegetation.



Walk across the meadow to reach some very large logs that are lying on the river bank a good place for a coffee stop. Keep walking up-stream (river Plym on your right) on a well-used permissive path. In places

the path has been mostly washed away but you can still get through with care.



You will quite quickly arrive at a viaduct. Go underneath and over the little wooden bridge that crosses a stream that leads into the Plym. Turn right and again follow the now wider permissive path still with the river Plym on your right.



Quite some way along the river bank you will reach a rock outcrop that borders the river. On the other side you will find 4 large logs lying on the ground which is a good place to stop for a snack. A

few yards past the logs the path splits left and right. The paths both end up at the same place but you will need to use the much steeper left fork if the river has flooded the lower path.



Soon after the paths re-join they split again but this time you must ignore the narrow riverside path and fork left to walk up the steep rocky path. Halfway up you will see why we walk up and not down.



At the top, and just a few paces before stepping out on to the road, go sharply left and take the path that leads to the railway line cycle track and walk back to the start on the West Devon Way but this time in a southerly direction.



In just over a mile you will arrive back at the bridge where you left the cycle track an hour or so ago. Turn left go up the slope and walk over the bridge.



Go through a wooden gate and walk up the hill until you reach a wide level track. This was the Plymouth and Dartmoor Tramway which opened in 1823 and which mostly took granite from Princetown to Sutton Harbour. Most of the rails were removed in 1916.



When you reach it turn left



Stay on the track for nearly a mile until you see some tall fencing enclosing a protected area of woodland on your left. Turn left and follow the fence line downhill ignoring the downhill cycle track through the woods.



At the bottom of the hill turn right and walk along the level track to a gate.



Go through the gate and out on to the road and walk back to one of the two Plymbridge car park where you parked your car.



The next walk in the series will take you through a tunnel.