

Roborough Down

Leats Cycle ways and Tramways



A circular walk of 6.8 miles that should take you about 3.5/4 hours.

You have probably crossed Roborough Down by car or bus countless times so now is your chance to stop and explore the area rich in antiquities including an Iron Age Camp and barrows as well as an ancient tramway and 3 different leats. The walk will take you to the village of Bickleigh and then along the route 27 cycle track part of the West Devon Way going over a viaduct and through a long tunnel. You will walk next to the river Meavy for a mile and along a tramway with granite sleepers still visible. The route back takes you next to the disused Devonport leat before finally visiting the Iron Age Camp (it may not be) which countless people drive past without ever knowing it's there.

The Stagecoach No.1 bus won't stop on Roborough Down unless you ring the bell. Coming from Tavistock you need to do this as soon as the bus starts to climb the hill after passing the Clearbrook left turn. Coming from Plymouth ring the bell as soon as you have gone past the Dartmoor Diner. The walk starts at the Plymouth bound bus stop where Little Down Lane meets the A386 consequently if you are coming up from Plymouth you will need to cross over to the south bound carriageway using the central reservation.



The walk starts in the small car park at the top of Little Down Lane where it joins the A386 Plymouth to Tavistock road. Coming from Plymouth it's the first right turn having entered Roborough Down. From Tavistock it's the next left turn after passing the Clearbrook turning

The start of the walk



From the car park continue walking along Little Down Lane towards Bickleigh



After passing new Water Treatment works the lane does now become a little narrower.



Turn left when you reach the Bickleigh road and using the pavement on the otherside of the road walk on down to and through the village and past the Royal Marines Camp.



Ignore the left turn to Shaugh Prior and Wotter and keep on going for another 150m.



You will come to a bridge over the old railway line that is now the route 27 cycle track which is where we want to be. Immediately on the other side of the bridge there is a yellow salt bin and a footpath finger post on your right. Turn right here and keeping right walk on down to the cycle track.



When you reach it turn right and walk back under the bridge you have just walked over and stay on the track for about 1 ¾ miles going over Ham Green Viaduct



and through a tunnel.



About 300m from the otherside of the tunnel you reach the next access point. Here come off the cycle track turn right and walk down the hill to the bridge



Go under the bridge and in no more than 50m



turn left into a field by going over the stile. As you walk through the field the river Meavy will be on your right. The footpath meanders a bit going over a couple of stiles but basically follow the well used path with the river on your right all the way to a stone bridge that crosses over the river. Its about ¾ of a mile from here.



Go over the stile and turn left and



almost immediately you reach a sharp left hand bend. Here fork right and stay on the track with the river still on your right



Approx 350 m along this track look out for a a footpath finger post and turn left



to go through the short tunnel that goes under the disused railway line. Immediately on the other side go up a ladder stile that is on your left. Turn right and follow the path through the wood to a stile.



Go over the stile and staying close to the hedge on your right walk up the field to another stile.



Go over the stile and up the short slope and turn left to walk once again along the route 27 cycle track but this time in a southerly direction



You will find yourself walking along the old tramway that once went from Princetown all the way down to Sutton Harbour with waggons carrying granite. You can read all about it when you pass through the next gate where you will find an information board.



In no more than 100m past the gate and information board fork left off the cycle track, which now goes in a great big loop, to take a short cut across the moor.



The shortcut takes you across the now dried up Plymouth Leat. The path through the gorse and scrub is fairly obvious. In the distance, on the horizon, you should be able to see some parked cars under the red arrow.



You will reach the road that goes up to the A386 (or down to Clearbrook). We now want to go to the junction of this road and the A386 but instead of walking along the road we are going to follow the leat that goes in the same direction.



To do this cross over the road and walk past the car park on a wide grassy area until you reach the leat.



When you reach the leat turn right and walking on this side of the leat follow it for about 750m passing over a road (Roborough Down lane) on your way. Magnificent engineering; Plymouth leat was first built in 1590



When you reach this opening fork right onto a parallel path



Push through the trees and step out on to the road and walk up to the junction.



To reach the alleged iron age hill fort you need to cross the A386 by using the central reservation. Having crossed over to the other side and climb over the moorland boundary fence that is behind a bus stop. Turn left and walk next to the fence.



You will soon reach a road that leads off from the A386 towards Milton Combe. Here cross over and make your way up to the highest point in front of you. You will notice a circular enclosure with ditches and this is the prehistoric camp although it is now thought more likely to have been a stock enclosure albeit very old.

Click on this link to find out more about the camp

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MDV2366&resourceID=104

and on this link to find out more about Plymouth leat

https://www.heritagegateway.org.uk/Gateway/Results_Single.aspx?uid=MDV19108&resourceID=104

The end of the walk



Having explored the Iron Age camp and with the A386 on your left head on down the grassy slope to a driveway and small car park turn left and when you walk out to the A386 you will see Little Down lane opposite.