

A very short walk at Hexworthy but with lots of interesting things to see



This 1.75 mile walk that should take hardly more than an hour but allow a bit longer to look at all the interesting things you will see on your way around. On the walk you will encounter an old tin mine, a tunnel entrance a really well preserved blowing house where the tin was smelted. Further on you will walk across Fairy Bridge to John Bishops House and then back via Dolly 's house and a splendid stone wall.

To find the start drive to Hexworthy PL20 6SD where you will find the Forest Inn which you might want to return to after the walk. Go past the pub and up the steep hill and turn right signposted to Sherberton. Drive along the road until you come to a parking area just before you reach a gate.



Set off from the car park by continuing along the road and through the gate. Just past the gate on your left is a deep cutting known as a gert being part of Gobbett tin mine. The mine was likely first worked in the 14/15 century but was known to be operational between 1836-74 finally closing in 1876.



Keep on down the road to Sherberton and take the next left turn a gated road that is used by SWWA to reach the Swincombe intake works and dam. Go through the gate and then look left to see some fencing 30m or so up the hill side.



Walk on up to it passing the now barely visible remains of what was once Gobbett Cottage and you will see the entrance to a tunnel. This was originally an adit that drained mine workings but was taken into use by SWWA as a route for pipes that run between Swincombe and Venford reservoir. Come back down and keep going along the road



When the road starts to rise up on your right is a blowing house which processed the tin ore from the mine.



This is an early medieval blowing house and is the only example on the moor which has an upper and lower crazing stone. These crazing mills were used to grind the ore which had been roughly crushed in “dry” stamping mills and probably predate the mortar stones that are far more commonly seen acting just like a kitchen pestle and mortar to break up the rock.

See <https://dartmooreexplorations.co.uk/gobbett-tinners-mill/>

Having explored the blowing house carry on along the road.



Soon a wooden bridge comes into view. Apparently originally known as Fairy Bridge it has been washed away on several occasions.

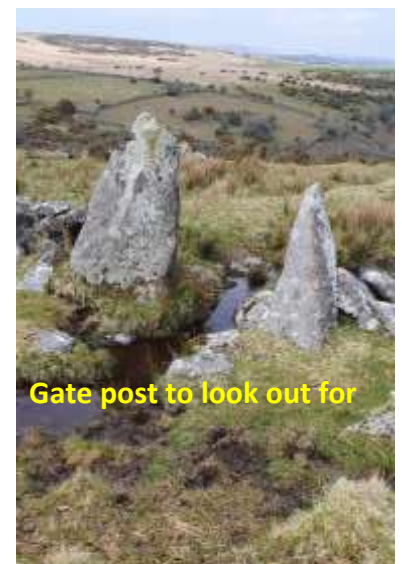
Next to it are some challenging stepping stones. You will find the bridge safer. Go over the bridge and walk on up to the derelict building you can see.



The building is called John Bishops house named after the owner who built it in the early 1800's. Mr Bishop was apparently an expert wall builder and many of the field boundaries can be attributed to him. In fact we will pass one on our way back to the car. Having viewed the building come back to the road.



Almost immediately opposite the path that leads to the bridge from the SWWA road you will see a finger post with a Dartmoor Way marker on it. The way back to your car is via the Dartmoor Way so set off up the narrow track between gorse bushes. Not very far up the hill there is a wide clearing in the gorse. Here look left and head towards a wall with some tall gate posts.



When you reach the wall go left and find Dolley Treble's cottage or what's left of it.

Read all about it here.

https://www.legendarydartmoor.co.uk/2016/03/28/dolly_treble/



Having viewed Dolly Treble's cottage turn around and walk back to the Dartmoor Way and continue on your way.



Stay on the Dartmoor Way track going through this gateway and admiring the quality of stone wall building said to be the work of John Bishop.

When you reach the road turn left and you should see your car ahead of you.

Now before you leave the area after passing or leaving the pub as you drive back down the road towards Dartmeet and Princetown look to your left as you go around the left hand bend in the road and you will see Jolly Lane Cottage. Jolly Lane Cot was built by Thomas Satterley in 1835. The cottage was allegedly built and occupied in one day as Thomas's father-in-law wished to remarry and provide a home for his new wife. The local farmers refused to help but while they were absent at a festival the labourers got together and built the house. By the time the farmers returned the father had already lit a fire in the completed house. By the law at that time if the house could be built and a fire lit in the grate all in one day this constituted a freeholding and so he could not be dispossessed.

My thanks to Legendary Dartmoor, Dartmoor Explorations and the Devon HER for providing additional information.