

NOTES

Mine Workings

The land between the railway and the river was heavily mined for copper in the 19th century.

Plymouth to Tavistock (South) Railway

This line, one of two routes into Tavistock was closed down in 1962. The Magpie viaduct which is over 215 yards long and more than 60 feet high still stands and awaits rebirth as part of the Devon Coast to Coast Cycle route.

Walkham Viaduct

The original viaduct was a Brunel-designed cantilever bridge. The wooden cantilevers were replaced with iron in 1896. It was 367 yards long and ran 130 feet above the river until its demolition in 1965. There are plans to span the river at this point with a foot/cycle bridge as part of the national cycle route.

Grenofen Bridge

This was an important link in the early route between Tavistock and Buckland Monachorum. The wood through which the track climbs from the bridge is Sticklepath Wood. "Stickle" is an old word for "steep" which, as you will find, is a very apt description.

WILDLIFE

Birds

As you set off from the car park in spring and summer look out for the **Skylark**, **Chiffchaff**, **Willow Warbler**, **Meadow Pipit**, **Linnet** and the **Stonechat** that perches on the tallest gorse bush. High in the sky you might see **Buzzard** circling on thermals looking for prey, alive or dead, and **Swallows** and **Housemartins** competing aerobically.

In the woods there are **Jay**, **Treecreeper**, **Nuthatch**, **Coal Tit**, **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit**, **Long-tailed Tit** and **Goldcrest** together with the three species of **Woodpecker**. Other summer visitors include **Blackcap** and **Pied Flycatcher**.

As you walk by the river watch out for **Dipper**, **Grey Wagtail**, **Mallard** and **Grey Heron**. If you are observant (and lucky!) you might glimpse the electric blue of a **Kingfisher**.

Trees

The wooded area consists of beech, birch, rowan, hazel, alder, hawthorn, ash but it is the oak that predominates. Here, it is the **Pedunculate Oak** as opposed to the other most common native species, the **Sessile Oak**.

All these varieties of trees currently provide a rich habitat for the wildlife but in the past they were also a valuable source of building material and fuel for the many mines in the area.

Roe deer

The roe deer is becoming more numerous in the wooded areas around the edge of the Moor. If you are lucky when walking through the woods, particularly along the line of the railway, you may see their white hindquarters as they run away.

Fish

Adult **Brown Trout** swim up from the larger rivers to the shallower, faster flowing rivers such as the **Walkham** to spawn in the heart of the Moor. **Salmon** are also fished here.



Walk No.1 UPPATON CROSS – MAGPIE VIADUCT AND GRENOFEN BRIDGE



| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Distance | 3 miles / 4.5 km |
| (Shortened version) | 1½ miles / 2.5 km) |
| Time | 2 hours |
| (Shortened version) | 1 hour) |

Description A varied walk taking in open common, a disused railway track, wooded riverbanks and a beautiful granite bridge over the River Walkham.

Difficulties? Generally easy. Some sections of path along the riverbank can be muddy after heavy rain. The track from Grenofen Bridge back on to the open common is rocky and quite steep.

Start point Car park near the signpost at the road junction at Uppaton. (The parking area before that opposite Long Ash Garden Centre.)



through the trees. Keep to the left of the deep **mineworkings** (children and dogs should be under close control here) to reach the track of the disused **Plymouth to Tavistock railway**. Turn left along the track.

After $\frac{3}{4}$ mile the railway passes under a small bridge. At this point you can take a short cut which will reduce the distance of the walk by $1\frac{1}{2}$ miles and avoid the steep climb out of the valley from Grenofen Bridge.

Short cut

After passing under the bridge, turn left off the railway as soon as you can manage. Cross the wire fence and walk back to the bridge. Turn right and go uphill along the bridle path for $\frac{1}{4}$ mile through the oak, hazel and hawthorn until you reach a track crossroad. You are now back on the route of the full walk.

Full Walk

200 yds after passing under the bridge the level track emerges from a cutting and ends. At this point another viaduct, the **Walkham Viaduct**, used to carry the line across the river Walkham. This viaduct has long gone. Make your way down the steep path zigzagging down to the river.

Continue along the riverside path downstream for about $\frac{1}{2}$ mile until you reach **Grenofen Bridge** – a good place for a picnic. Do not cross the bridge. With your back to the bridge, climb out of the valley along the rough, wide stony track that winds steeply for $\frac{1}{2}$ mile out to the open common.

As soon as the track leaves the wood and levels out leave it and bear left (south-east) following a path through a band of hawthorn bushes.

You will then be on a broad path running slightly downhill parallel to the wooded valley on your left.

When you reach an intersection of paths in a wooded area ignore the narrower path that bears left and descends through the trees (this is where the short cut rejoins the full walk) - keep going ahead on the main track which now climbs into the open up the hillside.

As the path gains height, you will be rewarded with good panoramic views of the western flanks of Dartmoor. When you reach the highest point of the track, you will be able to see your starting point ahead of you and slightly to your left.

Walk directions Walk away from the car park in a north-westerly direction along any of the many green paths leading down into the valley. Keep going downhill and you cannot go wrong. Eventually, amongst the trees, you will be able to make out Magpie railway viaduct spanning the neck of the valley.

Do not go under the viaduct but 100 yards or so before, climb steeply and diagonally out of the valley on the left hand side on one of the narrow paths