

NOTES

Burrator Reservoir

Constructed to replace the leats as Plymouth's water supply system. Original level completed in 1898 but raised by 10 feet in 1928 to increase the capacity from 668 to 1,026 million gallons.

Yelverton to Princetown Railway

This branch line was opened in 1883 and closed in 1956. It followed much of the original route of the horse-drawn granite tramway from Swelltor Quarry.

Devonport Leat

Commenced in 1793 to supply water to Devonport and the dockyard, it begins high on the moor from the West Dart River. Between its source and Burrator, where it now ends, it includes a tunnel some 650 yards long and a spectacular waterfall leading into an aqueduct over the River Meavy.

Stone Cross

One the many granite crosses on Dartmoor guiding travellers over the packhorse tracks across Dartmoor.

Leather Tor Farm

This is one of the many farms in the watershed of the reservoir that was bought by Plymouth Corporation before its level was raised so as to preserve the purity of the water discharging into it. Only one farmhouse was lost when the first stage of the dam was built. **Do not** climb on the ruined walls, they are very unstable.

Potato Cave

This cave was excavated by the farmer to store root crops. There are several of these man-made caves in the area. Some were used as tool stores by the tinnners.

Sheepstor Dam

Construction started in 1894 and took longer than anticipated to complete because of the lack of solid granite bedrock. It was built over the only road into Sheepstor. For the 2 years it was being built all goods were brought into the village by packhorse.

WILDLIFE

Birds

At the start of the walk on the open area of down listen out for the **Skylark** and look for the **Meadow Pipit**, **Linnet** and **Stonechat** usually perched on the highest piece of gorse.

Amongst the trees are **Jay**, **Treecreeper**, **Nuthatch**, **Blue Tit**, **Great Tit**, **Coal Tit** and, occasionally, **Long-tailed Tit** and perhaps **Goldcrest**.



Walking alongside the River Meavy watch for **Dipper** and **Grey Wagtail**.

As you walk down to Norsworthy Bridge you are likely to hear the rapid cackling laugh of the **Green Woodpecker**.

When you go through the gate onto the reservoir look for **Grey**

Heron, **Cormorant** and **Mallard**. In the winter months you may also see **Canada Geese**, **Teal** and **Goosander**.

At the end of the walk, see if the **Kingfisher** that frequents the corner of the reservoir on the Sheepstor side of the dam is present.



Trees and plants

Although most of the planting around the reservoir consists of the commercially-attractive conifers there is a mix of these together with a wide variety of broadleaved trees. Visually, this combination softens the outline of the plantations and adds to the seasonal appeal. Wildlife also flourishes in this hospitable environment.

Animals

The **Roe Deer** is becoming more numerous in the wooded areas around the edge of the Moor. If you are lucky you may see their white hind-quarters as they run away.



WALK No.4

AROUND BURRATOR OFF-ROAD (ALMOST)



Distance 4 miles (6 km)

Time 2 ½ hours

Description Every weekend the road around Burrator is much used by walkers and cyclists as an easy way of exercising in the countryside. However, with a little extra effort you can avoid 90% of the crowds and traffic and experience much more of the variety of beauty and interest that is packed into this small corner of Dartmoor.

Difficulties? Easy. Mainly level paths. Four stiles. Three short stretches on road.

Toilets, refreshments Toilets and ice cream van (usually) at Burrator Dam. Ice cream van sometimes in summer at Norsworthy Bridge.

Start point Burrator Dam



Walk Directions

Walk 100yds along the road by the **reservoir** from the dam until you reach the spot with a stone bench on the left of the road where a broad track (signposted "cycle route") comes down the hillside and joins the road. Above the bench, water gushes from a large pipe and cascades down the rocks to flow under the road and into the reservoir.

Walk up the track. After 200yds climb up the stone steps going up to your right through the iron gate. These are what remains of Burrator Halt on the **Yelverton to Princetown railway line**. Turn right and walk along the old railway track from which you will have good views of

Burrator.

Continue through a gate along the track which now runs above and alongside the **Devonport Leat**. Go through another gate and leave the track, turning right down the slope to a road. Cross over the road and walk alongside the leat through a mature stand of Douglas Fir until you reach another road. Cross over this road and over a stile slightly to your left. Go straight on. This path broadens out and runs through a conifer plantation parallel to the leat which is hidden from your view by undergrowth. The track ends at a gate and stone stile which gives access to the open moor.

Continue straight ahead on the path, signposted "Public Footpath Stanlake Farm" until you join the road with the leat on your right. Walk along the road

until you arrive at a junction with a **stone cross** where the metalled road turns right across the leat and goes steeply downhill. Go straight ahead at this point along a broad, rough track. After 200yds or so the track crosses the leat near a hut. Continue downhill on the track across the leat. There are good views of the tors at the eastern end of Burrator from here. Follow the track as it descends into the wood passing the ruins of **Leather Tor farm**. 50yds after the farm, you will see a large hole in the bank on the left of the track. This is a **Potato Cave**. The track soon reaches an old bridge across the River Meavy. Cross the bridge and turn right along another broad track. This follows the river down to Norsworthy Bridge and the road.

Turn left and walk along the road, watching out for traffic. After a sharp right-hand bend the road passes a gravelly car park on the left ("**Arboretum Walks**"). Continue along the road until the end of the fence on the left. Turn left off the road and follow the track (signed as a public bridleway) along the edge of the wood through two old gateways. After the second gateway leave the main track and bear right at the signpost ("**Bridleway – Sheepstor Village**") and follow the smaller path which initially climbs ahead of you and then bends to the right and contours around the open hillside 20yds or so from the wood below. Continue along this distinct path as it picks its way through the bracken and boulders. You will see ahead a wooded enclosure jutting out from the main wood. Continue along the path as it goes between the two areas of woodland but turn right through a gateway and into the wood as soon as the wall ends on the left. A broad track leads downhill, through a gateway and onto a road.

Turn left along the road for 50yds then leave the road and go through the gate directly in front of you. The track then goes around the reservoir via the smaller of its two dams, the **Sheepstor Dam**. The path then runs through trees between the road and the reservoir as far as the main dam. Climb over a stile 50yds from the dam onto the road, cross the dam and return to starting point.