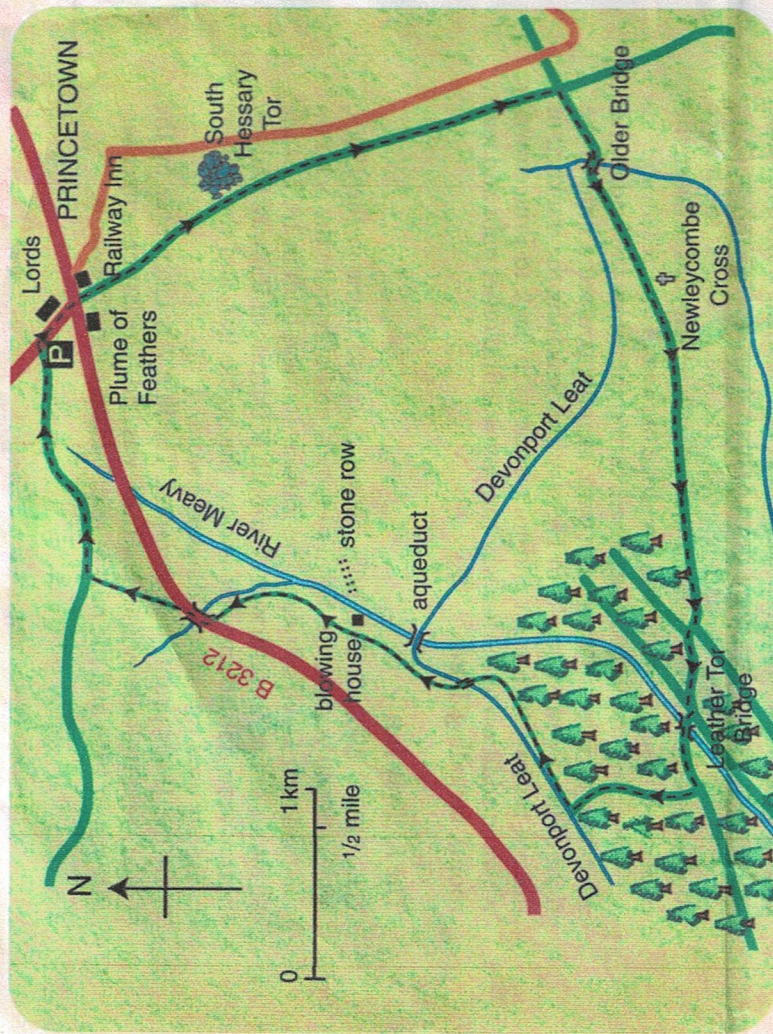




Walk 2 Princetown, South Hessary Tor and Black Tor

Distance: 12.5km (7 3/4 miles) Duration of walk: 4 hours

Character: A moorland and forest walk, mainly by defined paths. It is less steep than most moorland routes, and has much of historical interest as well as magnificent views.

Turn right out of Princetown car park (SX589735). Walk past the High Moorland Visitor Centre and take the bridleway between the Railway Inn and the Plume of Feathers. It is a flat, broad path leading to South Hessary Tor, which has a Victorian spike on its crown. This is a boundary marker for Dartmoor Forest, one of only two left.

Walk on for another 1.6km to a very clear junction of bridleways. Turn right and head SW. Follow the track over the Devonport Leat at Old Bridge and on by the old tin workings, the scars now covered by grass and furze. Walk on to Newleycombe Cross, just to the left of the track at SX592703. This ancient cross, one of over a hundred on Dartmoor, has been well restored. The original top portion has been set in a new shaft, using the ancient socket stone.

Continue along the track, enjoying the views of Sheep's Tor and Burrator Reservoir. Enter woodland and turn right then left at a junction of tracks, PUBLIC BRIDLEPATH LEATHER TOR FARM. Continue descending to a 'crossroads': turn right for LEATHER TOR FARM AND COUNTY ROAD and start to ascend.

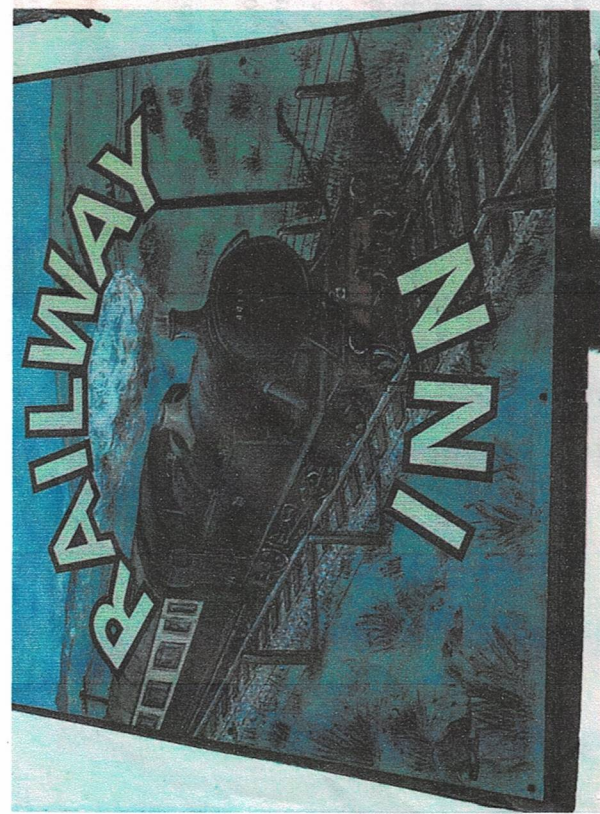
On the right after 150m you will see a man-made cave, said to have been used by miners for storing potatoes: they stayed out here all the working week, far from their homes. 20m beyond the cave, turn right over a stile for DEVONPORT LEAT. At the leat turn right, for STANLAKE FARM. Follow the path beside the leat and out of the woods by a stile.

Work began on the leat in 1793. It served the expanding community on the Devonport dockyard site until the construction of the Burrator Reservoir in 1898. Now diverted into Burrator, much of the leat remains as an integral part of local drainage. Trout abound.

Walk beside the leat and after 150m cross by a clapper bridge. Continue upstream on the west bank to an aqueduct, which brings the leat down Raddick Hill, making a mini waterfall. Leave the leat here and follow the same NNE course along the path parallel to the infant River Meavy.

Follow the grassy path up, then bear right, nearing the river again, to Black Tor Falls and the ruins of a 17th century tin mill, marked 'Blowing House' on the OS map, because the waterwheel drove bellows which heated a furnace to smelt the ore. For centuries tin was the main source of Dartmoor's wealth. Although production peaked in Tudor times, the industry continued into the early 20th century. The

A local artist painted the double-sided pub sign of the Railway Inn, which shows locomotive 4410, the last to run on the Yelverton to Princetown railway



remains of trenches and mines are scattered all over the moor.

Continue up the west bank of the river. About 150m beyond the blowing house ruins, on the opposite bank, you can see the Hart Tor double stone row, which is accessible in dry weather. It is 126m long and ends at a cairn. A second cairn heads a shorter single row.

Continue more or less parallel to the river, but keep to the higher rougher ground along a rather indistinct path which runs between the tussocks of boggy ground and the slope of the hill on the left.

On meeting the Princetown Road, turn right across the bridge and after 50m turn left into a rough path, aligning yourself a little to the right of the TV mast on North Hessay Tor. Reaching the trackbed of the old railway, turn right and follow the path back to Princetown, where in addition to the Railway Inn you will find other pubs and tea-rooms, including 'Lords'.

The Railway Inn

Tel: (01822) 890232. This pub recovered its old name in the 1990s, after some 40 years as the Devil's Elbow – probably from the bend on the road near Devil's Bridge. The Railway Inn was built in 1827 as the terminus of the horse-drawn Plymouth & Dartmoor Railway. Railway horses were stabled in what is now the Stable Bar, and the railway company used the inn buildings as a store.

By the 1880s profits had slumped. The line was taken over by the Great Western Railway and new track was laid. The last passenger service ran in 1956 and the rails were pulled up soon afterwards.