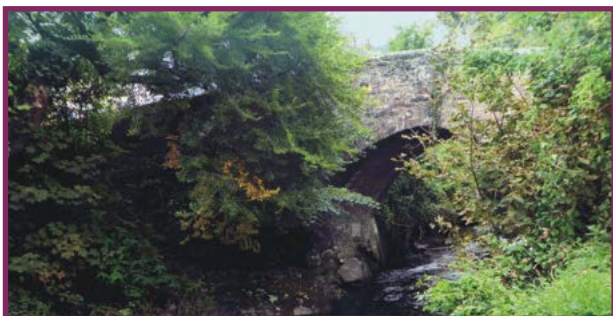




Stage 1: Ivybridge to Shipley Bridge

Start	SX 6366 5627 Ivy Bridge on Harford Road, Ivybridge
Finish	SX 6808 6289 Shipley Bridge car park
Distance	10 miles / 16 km
Total ascent	2,037 ft / 621 m
Refreshments	Ivybridge, Bittaford, Wrangaton Golf Course, South Brent (off route), Shipley Bridge (seasonal)
Public toilets	Ivybridge, Bittaford, Shipley Bridge
Tourist information	Ivybridge (The Watermark)



Ivy Bridge

Please refer also to the Stage 1 map.

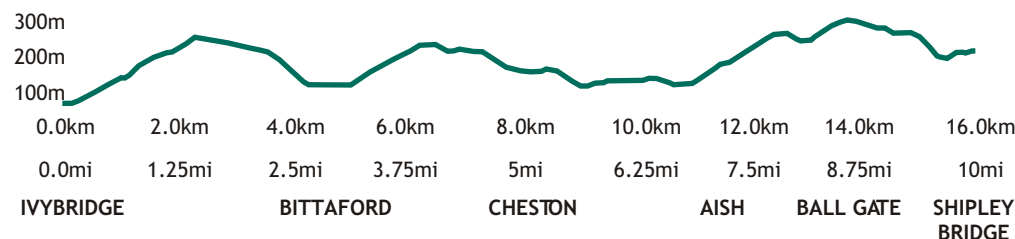
S The official start of the Dartmoor Way is on Harford Road by the medieval Ivy Bridge over the River Erme.

POOR VISIBILITY OPTION

In times of poor visibility or if anxious about your route-finding abilities over moorland head down Harford Road, bearing left near the bottom to meet the roundabout. Turn left on Exeter Road (B3213) and follow it to Bittaford (pavement all the way), re-joining the main route.

From the bridge head up Harford Road, sharing the route with the Two Moors Way / Devon Coast to Coast and passing the impressive buildings of the former Stowford Paper Mills. Head uphill past Ivybridge Community College to reach Cole Lane and Stowford Bridge Cross.

Elevation Profile



Ivybridge is easily accessed via the A38, and the only town on the Dartmoor Way to have direct access to the main rail network.

The original hamlet developed at a handy crossing point of the River Erme, and later became a staging post on the London to Plymouth road; the railway arrived in 1848. Ivybridge - which developed as a mill town during the 19th century, utilising the fast-flowing waters of the Erme - only officially became a town in 1977, four years after the opening of the A38 bypass.

The Watermark (local information) is down in the town near New Bridge, built in 1823 just downstream from the older Ivy Bridge, originally a 13th-century packhorse bridge, passed on Harford Road.

Ivybridge marks the start of the Two Moors Way long-distance walking route, which is followed for 102 miles across Devon to Lynmouth on the north coast.

Cross the mainline railway via Stowford Bridge, entering Dartmoor National Park, then head up Harford Lane. Just past the entrance to Stowford Farm turn right on a bridlepath track that soon bears left and ascends steadily to reach the gate onto Harford Moor, where there is a good information board.

Please note that the route is not waymarked from this point until it leaves the moor after Point 2.

1 The Two Moors Way heads up the middle of three broad grassy ways that can be seen ahead, but the Dartmoor Way bears half-right on a path that ascends through bracken to meet the old trackbed of the old Red Lake Railway, constructed in the early twentieth century to transport china clay from remote moorland workings. Turn right along the trackbed, which soon curves left around the slopes of Western Beacon, with lovely views across South Devon.



The Redlake Tramway was a railway built to carry supplies and workers between Bittaford and the clay workings at Redlake. The narrow gauge line was built in 1911 and ran for 8.25 miles (13.5km) deep into southern Dartmoor. At Redlake, a large spoil tip formed from the workings is known locally as 'The Matterhorn of Dartmoor'.

A long straight stretch (the chimney of the former Cantrel china clay processing works comes into view) leads to a broad level grassy area, the former railway turntable. About 50yd further on bear right off the trackbed to find a gate onto a lane. The lane descends very steeply, eventually passing the old works and under the mainline railway bridge to meet the B3213.

2 Cross over with care; turn left along the pavement to reach the railway viaduct at Bittaford. Cross the road and turn right, crossing two lanes, then turn left up Wrangaton Road (The Horse & Groom pub is on the corner), ascending steeply. Turn first left on a dead-end lane, Hillside. Reach a gate across the lane and continue on a well-signed public footpath that ascends past buildings at Moorhaven Village (formerly Plymouth Borough Asylum). The path is well signed up the lane, soon passing Blackadon Farm and holiday cottages. Continue through a gate and up an enclosed path to reach the edge of Wrangaton Golf Course.

The path is very well signed through the golf course. Turn right along its lower edge, soon bearing left to skirt a green and crossing a leat, then bear right to follow the lower boundary again. On meeting a surfaced path turn left, soon passing the clubhouse and car park. Pass through Wrangaton Moor Gate then head down Golf Links Road to meet a staggered crossroads at Marwoods Cross.

Turn left, towards South Brent.

3 At the next crossroads (Shute Cross) bear left; in the little hamlet of Cheston (Cheston Cross) keep straight on, signed to Owley. At a fork keep right on a descending lane which has deteriorated to a rough track. Pass a stile leading into the Devon Wildlife Trust's Lady's Wood nature reserve, cross the Glaze Brook then ascend to a T-junction and turn right. Look out for a huge oak tree and a footpath through a gate to the left, then follow the left edge of the next field the railway line comes into view to the right. Cross a stile; head straight across the next field and over a stile onto the lane, and turn left.

Just past the gates to Great Aish turn right through a gate at a footpath sign. Head diagonally left across the field to cross a big stone stile; head across three more fields and stiles to reach a lane.

For facilities in South Brent turn right to cross Lydia Bridge, then right again on a path alongside the River Avon (Lydia Mill was owned by the family of the renowned Dartmoor writer William Crossing). The pretty little town of South Brent sits on the mainline railway (its station closed in 1964) below Brent Hill. Before the 19th century and the coming of the turnpike roads most of the village's trade was transported by packhorse (hence The Pack Horse Inn on Plymouth Road). St Petroc's Church is one of the finest in Devon, with a massive Norman tower.



South Brent town centre

Turn left, ascending steeply, to reach houses at Aish (there's a postbox in the wall of the white cottage on the corner).

POOR VISIBILITY OPTION **6**

In times of poor visibility or if anxious about your route-finding abilities over moorland keep straight on up the lane, which runs all the way up the west side of the Avon valley to reach Shipley Bridge. The main route is joined on the way (at the bottom of Diamond Lane).

4 Turn left up the lane, soon leaving the houses behind. It's a long and steady uphill haul but eventually the lane bears right and reduces to a rough track, still ascending. Pass through a gate onto the open ground of Aish Ridge.

Follow the bridlepath left on a grassy track that crosses the hill, with glorious views towards Ugborough Beacon. Descend to reach the boundary hedgebank, then bear right, soon descending under trees and passing through a gate. Keep ahead, soon passing through another gate, then along the east side of Corringdon Ball to pass through the splendid monumental stone gateposts flanking Corringdon Ball Gate.



Corringdon Ball Gate

In past times Diamond Lane was part of the ancient track followed by monks from Buckfast Abbey to Plympton Priory.

Turn left, soon crossing the Bala Brook then heading uphill to cross a cattle grid. **F** The car park entrance at Shipley Bridge marks the end of this stage.



Near Shipley Bridge

5 Turn right across the common, following the bridlepath over rough ground where the wall on the right drops away keep straight on, picking it up again on a rounded corner. Keep straight on along a broad walled corridor. Head for a bridlepath sign that comes into view ahead, then pass through a gate marking the top of Diamond 'Lane', a steep, rocky, wet and at times tricky descent to reach the lane at the bottom.