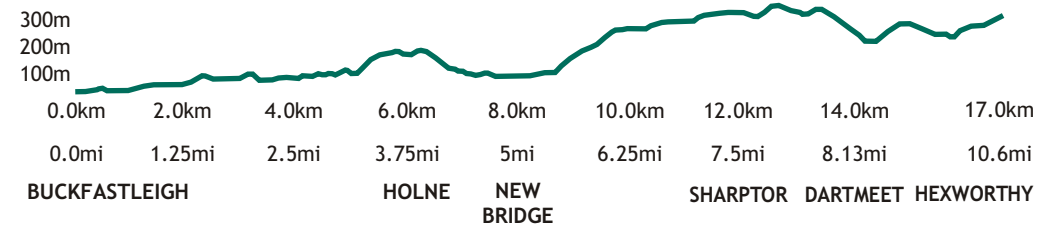




High Moor Link part 1: Buckfast to Hexworthy

Start	SX 7433 6669 Buckfast Road (Dart Bridge), Buckfast
Finish	SX 6516 7266 Top of the drive to Clouds Edge, Sherberton lane, above Hexworthy
Distance	10.5 miles / 16.5 km
Total ascent	2,575ft / 785 m
Refreshments	Buckfast, Scorrilton (off route), Holne, Dartmeet, Hexworthy (off route)
Public toilets	New Bridge, Dartmeet
Tourist information	None

Elevation Profile



Please refer also to the [High Moor Link \(Part 1\) map](#).

S From the roundabout by Dart Bridge head up Buckfast Road, signed to Buckfast/Buckfastleigh (fortunately there's a pavement all the way to Buckfast Abbey).

The main DW route crosses the bridge then turns left towards Ashburton.

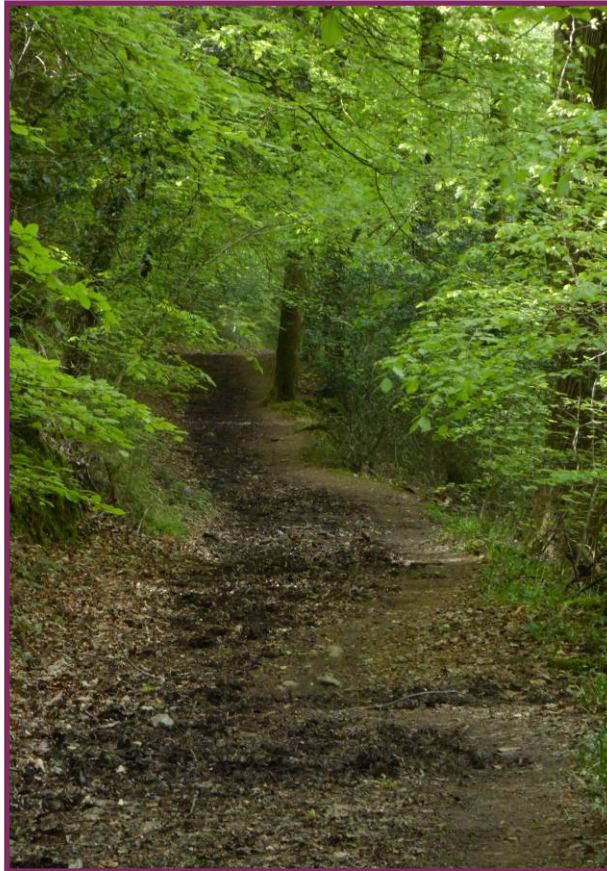
Pass The Abbey Inn on the River Dart - you'll get occasional glimpses of the water - then reach a small group of shops, where you'll get your first impressive view of the Abbey (rebuilt on its ancient foundations by a team of monks between 1907 and 1938). At the mini-roundabout keep straight on under the South Gate (stone arch) into the peaceful Abbey precinct. Follow a broad tarmac way then cross the beautiful close, with the West Gate (left) and The Grange restaurant (right), to exit under the arch of the North Gate on Buckfast Road, which soon curves left to reach a T-junction.

Keep straight on along leafy Grange Road, passing houses. The lane bears sharp right at Fritz's Grave then left past the lane to Hembury Woods. A long, steady climb leads to a staggered crossroads at Hockmoor Head. Turn right, signed Scorrilton and Holne; pass the entrances to Hockmoor Farm and Holybrook House.



Buckfast Abbey is an astonishing structure, with an even more astonishing history. The original wooden abbey was founded in 1018, and rebuilt in stone by the Cistercians from 1147; it was dissolved in 1539 under Henry VIII. Local mill owner William Berry built a four-turreted mansion in the ruins (still in existence today) and in 1882 a group of six Benedictine monks from France set about rebuilding the abbey themselves, which took the next 30 years. Today fragments of medieval architecture sit comfortably alongside more modern construction. The welcoming Grange Restaurant is open to passing visitors, as is the visitor centre.

1 Immediately before a lodge house bear right on a bridleway track, and through a gate into beautiful Burchetts Wood (NT). The bridlepath ascends gently, then descends into the valley of the Holy Brook to meet another path. Turn left and head upstream, ignoring paths to left and right and soon walking alongside the brook; note a disused wheel pit under vegetation on the left. Cross the brook via a wooden footbridge to meet a lane on a bend. Turn right, soon ascending steeply, to reach a house (Mill Leat) and barn.



Burchetts Wood

2 Look for a footpath heading left through a gate. Head across the field on a narrow and tricky path (very overgrown in summer), eventually passing a footpath sign on a telegraph pole, and then crossing a stile. Continue along the lower edge of a sloping meadow, and over a stile onto a lane. Houses in Scorrilton can be seen across the valley. Turn left, downhill.

3 Where the lane bears sharp left - by HRH The Queen's Diamond Jubilee stone - turn right, up a steeply ascending hedged track (now sharing the route with the Two Moors Way).

For Scorrilton and The Tradesmans Arms follow the lane sharp left, turn first right to ascend into the village, then right again for the pub.



The pretty village of **Holne** is blessed with its own community shop and tearoom and the 14th-century church of St Mary the Virgin. Charles Kingsley, author of *The Water Babies*, was born in The Vicarage in 1819, and later moved to Clovelly on Devon`s north coast.

The track reaches a lane; keep ahead to a junction (Play Cross) on the edge of Holne. Bear right to pass the community shop and tearoom, then St Mary's Church and fourteenth-century Church House Inn. At the staggered crossroads keep straight on, uphill, signed to Ashburton and Princetown. At the T-junction (Butts Cross) turn left for a few paces.

4 Turn right through a gate on a footpath signed to New Bridge. This marks the start of your descent into the Dart valley: the views just get better and better! Cross a stile and head down the next field, through a kissing gate by tall oak trees, then through another gate at the bottom of the next field: you'll be able to hear the river below. Descend across the next field to enter **Holne Woods** (NT) via a gate. Continue steadily downhill to meet a path running along the bottom of the valley; keep straight on alongside the beautiful River Dart. At a fork keep straight on (left) to find a footbridge onto the road by New Bridge. Cross the bridge.

Please note that the route is intermittently waymarked from this point until Dartmeet.



Footpath from Holne to New Bridge

5 Turn left on a lane to Hannaford, passing the car park and toilets (the Two Moors Way ducks down sharp left to pass under the bridge). Look out for a metal barrier and bear left on a broad path into the DWT's Dart Valley Nature Reserve. This lovely path, walled in places, leads through the woods; at a path junction, with a five-bar gate right (Lower Hannaford Farm), keep straight on, soon entering more open ground with bracken and scattered hawthorns.

6 Keep an eye out for a path crossroads - the gritty path underfoot turns to grass (SX 705704) - and turn right, soon meeting and following a boundary wall and fence, uphill.

If you reach the river again you've missed the turn.

This narrow path ascends steadily, soon bearing away from the wall and threading its way up the valley side. It's a big, long climb - eventually you'll be able to spot a track running along the contours of the spur (Aish Tor) ahead. Ignore a path heading off right (a good spot

to stop for a breather and look back at the view!) and continue the climb, emerging from the bracken and passing through low-growing gorse and heather. At long last the track - Dr Blackall's Drive, a nineteenth-century carriage drive - is reached.



On Dr Blackall's Drive

Dr Blackall's Drive was created by Dr Thomas Blackall, who came from a very prominent family in Exeter, and who was at one time Sheriff of the City of Exeter. He owned nearby Spitchwick Manor and had a deep love of Dartmoor. In the 1880s he and members of his family built a carriage drive that would enable them to enjoy the beautiful landscape of the Dart valley. Blackall enjoyed nothing more, when staying at Spitchwick Manor, than to take his carriage along this beautiful drive.

7 Turn left (re-joining the Two Moors Way) and follow the track - rough and rocky in places - high above the Dart valley, with glorious views upriver towards pointed Sharp Tor - the onward route crosses the saddle - with Mel Tor to its right. It is a stunning spot. At last the track bears right to skirt Mel Tor, passing a hut circle (left); the tower of Buckland-in-the-Moor church, below Buckland Beacon, can be seen away to the right. The track becomes enclosed between stone walls (a drift lane, used for driving animals onto and off the common). Where the walled section ends (TMW turns right) keep straight on along the edge of the common, alongside a wall, to meet a narrow lane. Turn left, descending gently.



On Sharp Tor

8 Where the wall on the left drops away bear right and head up towards Sharp Tor on a broad grassy way, aiming for the saddle between the two main outcrops. Cross the saddle: your next port of call is the parking area that can be seen on the road on the other side of the flat-bottomed combe ahead. Two paths wend their way up the far side - you need to find your way to the one on the right.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

In winter/after times of heavy rainfall the lower reaches of the combe are likely to be pretty wet, so you could take an alternative route to the parking area. Cross the saddle; before reaching the lower edge of the rocks turn right towards the road. Skirt a field wall corner then pass a solitary hawthorn. Pick up a path that parallels the road, passing stone circles, to reach the parking area. If you choose this route in high summer you will need to follow the verge, since the way past the stone circles will be concealed under a heavy growth of bracken.

Head down into the combe, passing a solitary hawthorn, on a broad grassy way. Where that narrows, about 100yd below the tree, bear right on a narrow path, aiming for the left end of a small copse of trees. On reaching the bottom of the combe (to avoid permanently boggy ground) bear right, skirting a fallen tree; a few steps beyond a single low-spreading hawthorn cross the stream/damp ground. Head steeply up the other side of a combe on a small path, to reach the parking area.

9 Turn left along the roadside verge for about 100yd, soon starting to descend into the Dart valley.

ALTERNATIVE ROUTE

You can follow the road all the way down to Dartmeet, but it's nicer to find your way down through the bracken-covered slopes of Yartor Down - but in high summer paths become more difficult to follow under bracken. You may end up taking a different way from the one described here - it's hard to stick to the same route each time on this section! - but it doesn't matter. Keep roughly parallel to the road all the way down, cutting off the loop that can be seen on the map. Make sure you don't start heading south (left) around the contours of the hill.

The road starts to descend a little more steeply, and bears slightly right ahead. Look for a gap in the roadside bank, at which point you'll find a path fork. Bear left, wending your way downhill and cutting off the road loop. There are fabulous views towards the end of the stage at Hexworthy, above the West Dart, and, closer to hand, the valley of the East Dart above Dartmeet. The path broadens for a short stretch then narrows at a fork; keep right down a small gully. Continue downhill, keeping straight ahead at a path crossroads. Near the bottom of the hill reach a T-junction. If you turn right you'll reach the road, so turn left; as this path bears away round the contours bear right. Head steeply downhill to reach a five-bar gate by a cattle grid, opposite the entrance to Dartmeet carpark and Badger's Holt riverside eatery. Cross the bridge over the East Dart.

10 As the road bears right, uphill, cross a private parking area then turn left on a signed path, passing behind two houses and through a gate to meet a path junction. Bear right, uphill, following signs to Huccaby. A very wet area has to be negotiated at the top of the field; pass through a gateway, then turn right on a rough walled track. Cross a stile; continue uphill and through a gate, then follow the path left, soon reaching open ground with great views. The way down across the field is marked by low wooden posts. Pass through a gate at the bottom and keep ahead to a track junction; turn right to meet the road.

Turn left, downhill, to pass St Raphael's chapel (built in 1868 as a combined chapel and schoolroom), then follow the pretty West Dart to cross Huccaby Bridge.



The quaint little church of St Raphael was built in the 1869 as a mission chapel to cater to worshippers living too far away from the parish church at Lydford. This is the only Anglican chapel in the country dedicated to St Raphael. A little further along the lane look out for Jolly Lane Cottage, said to be the last cottage on Dartmoor to have been built in one day; at that time (1835) it was accepted that if a piece of land could be enclosed and a cottage built (and the fire lit) between sunrise and sunset the property could be claimed by the builder.

Immediately over the bridge climb the wall ahead (via granite 'steps' in the hedgerbank). Once in the meadow bear left then follow the footpath which forks right, steeply uphill, across the meadow (wonderful flowers in spring and summer). At the top of the field cross a monumental granite stile, and head across the next field; farm buildings in Hexworthy come into view. At the end bear right through an open gateway to cross another granite stile. Keep along the left edge of the next field and through a gate into a farmyard. Two more gates gain a track on a bend opposite a big thatched house; turn right.

For the Forest Inn turn left.

The track curves left pass a beautiful thatched cottage, then ascends. Keep ahead where the track becomes rougher to meet the drive to Clouds Edge. Turn left to reach the top of the drive on the lane to Sherberton. **F**