



Stage 3: Ashburton to Bovey Tracey

Start	SX 7561 6989 The Bullring, centre of Ashburton
Finish	SX 8145 7823 Entrance to Mill Marsh Park, Bovey Bridge, Station Road, Bovey Tracey
Distance	12.25 miles / 19.75km
Total ascent	2,303ft / 702m
Refreshments	Ashburton, Haytor (off route), Parke, Bovey Tracey
Public toilets	Ashburton, Haytor (off route), Parke, Bovey Tracey
Tourist information	Ashburton, Haytor (DNPA, off route), Bovey Tracey

Please refer also to the Stage 3 map.

S From the centre of Ashburton, at the junction of West, East and North streets (The Bullring), head up North Street, soon passing the Town Hall. The road meets and follows the River Ashburn.

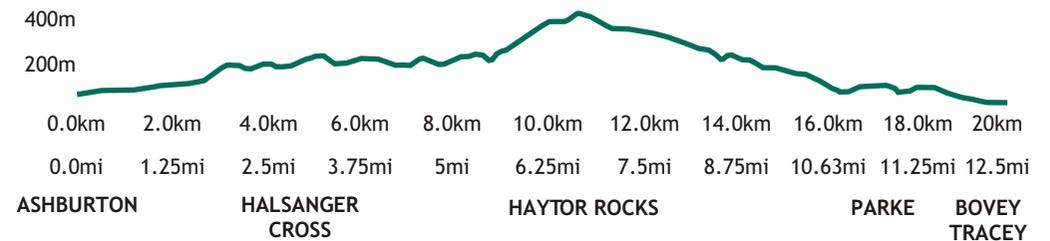
1 About 75yd later, just before the road curves left, turn right and ascend steps. Pass through a kissing gate into fields, to reach a footpath junction. Take the left (lower) footpath, signed to Cuddyford Cross, along the left edge of two fields, crossing a stile onto a lane.

Cross over and go through a kissing gate to meet a footpath junction. Keep straight on alongside a hedge, soon passing through a gate onto a track which runs along the lower edge of woodland, eventually meeting the Ashburn again.



Outside
Ashburton

Elevation Profile



At the end of the wood follow the track right, uphill. Ascend steadily, then descend (muddy in winter) to reach farm buildings at Lower Whiddon Farm. Turn right, then head up the farm drive past Higher Whiddon to reach a lane T-junction (a handy seat offers the chance of a breather).



Woods
near
Waterleat

2 Turn left to Owlacombe Cross, then turn left again (take care on this road section), enjoying lovely views towards the moor. The road descends, then ascends steadily to Halshanger Cross.

3 Turn right, signed to Bagtor, and follow this quiet and beautiful undulating lane for a couple of miles past scattered farms and houses. The biggest descent/ascent comes towards the end, where the lane drops to cross the River Lemon then climbs to Birchanger Cross. Turn left.



Near Halshanger

4 After 75yd, as the lane starts to bear right towards Haytor Vale, bear left on a narrow bridlepath signed 'To the moor'.

POOR VISIBILITY / EASIER OPTION **a**

In times of poor visibility or if anxious about your route-finding abilities over moorland keep ahead on the lane into Haytor Vale. Turn left at the T-junction (Smokey Cross), and follow the road uphill to reach the B3387. Cross over and turn right along the verge, then take the first lane left to reach the crossing point of the Granite Tramway and re-join the main route.

Descend to cross the Lemon via a clapper bridge, then climb steeply under trees. The path levels between fields, passes through a gate and meets a bridlepath/DW marker post on the edge of bracken-covered common, threaded with narrow paths.

Please note that the route is not waymarked from this point until it reaches Point 6.

You need to get to the top of the hill ahead, but there is no clear direct route. Follow the bridlepath, which initially bears left along the bottom edge of the common. At a fork bear right and ascend along the edge of old mineworkings: the bracken-covered ground drops away steeply left. Keep heading uphill - there's a clear grassy way between bracken and gorse bushes. At a fork keep right, now heading towards a solitary holly tree on the skyline. When level with the tree turn right to reach it. This is the perfect spot for a breather, with views to the Teign estuary on the south coast.

From the tree continue uphill across areas of bare granite, aiming for the highest point. Haytor comes into view, so head towards it - several paths all lead in roughly the same direction, but ideally you pass just to the right of a rusting iron animal feeder, now on level ground. Continue heading northwest towards the two outcrops (Lowman left, Haytor right) to reach Haytor upper car park.

5 Keep along the right edge of the car park and cross the road.

POOR VISIBILITY / EASIER OPTION **b**

In times of poor visibility or if anxious about your route-finding abilities over moorland turn right down the road - you can walk alongside it - descending to pass the National Park Visitor Centre and right turn to Haytor Vale; continue along the road and take the next lane left to reach the crossing point of the Granite Tramway and re-join the main route.



Haytor is arguably the best-known tor on Dartmoor. It is comprised of two outcrops, the more visible being the main one below which the Dartmoor Way passes; the lower one (to the west) is known as Haytor Low Man. This outcrop has one of the largest granite faces on the moor and is extremely popular with rock climbers.

Head up a broad grassy way, aiming for the right side of the two huge granite outcrops. Pass just to the right of the rocks and crest the hill, enjoying far-reaching views, then keep ahead, downhill, towards the spoil heaps flanking Haytor Quarry (a post-and-wire fence marks the boundary). Cross a track ([for a closer look at the quarry turn left](#)) and continue downhill on a clear path, dropping to cross damp and rocky ground - the source of the River Lemon is nearby - then head uphill to reach the Haytor Granite Tramway (which celebrated its 200th anniversary in September 2020).



Haytor Granite Tramway at Haytor

The Haytor Granite Tramway was built to convey granite from the quarries at Haytor to the Stover Canal. Unusually the track was formed of granite 'rails', shaped to guide the wheels of horse-drawn wagons. Remnants of this tramway can be seen further on the Dartmoor Way as it descends from Haytor following what is known as the 'Templer Way'. It was built in 1820 when granite was in high demand for public buildings and bridges in the developing cities of England. In 1850 the quarries employed about 100 men, but by 1858 they had closed due to the availability of cheaper Cornish granite.

Turn right along the tramway (joining the route of the Templer Way, 18 miles (29km) from Haytor to Shaldon on the south coast).

6 On meeting a lane (the low-level route joins from the left) cross over, still following the flanged granite rails; they come and go, so just keep ahead on the obvious path when traces disappear under the turf. The tramway descends through clumps of gorse, then bears left around the edge of Haytor Down, with lovely views across the Bovey

valley. At a path crossroads keep straight on through a gate and head downhill on a gritty path between hedgebanks. Pass through two big metal gates and keep descending through woodland, soon following the path sharp right and through a tall metal kissing gate. Emerge onto a track; turn left then right, downhill through woodland and another big metal kissing gate. The next gates leads into the Yarner Wood (East Dartmoor National Nature Reserve: [dogs on leads](#); [ponies carrying out conservation grazing](#)).



Haytor Granite Tramway in Yarner Woods

Follow the track ahead along the top edge of the wood, then (by an information board) bear left, downhill, on a beautiful path - the tramway is exposed again here - edged with tall beech trees. The tramway curves right along the contours; pass through a gate, soon enjoying far-reaching views over the Bovey valley. The next gate leads into a damp, scrubby, gorsy patch; the next gains a path T-junction.

7 The Templer Way is signed right but the Dartmoor Way turns left down a hedged bridlepath to reach the road at Reddaford Water via a gate.

8 Turn right; head up the road for about 500yd, passing Lower Down. Take the first lane left (look for DW signs on the telegraph pole right).

9 Where the lane starts to descend more steeply turn right over a stile into woodland (Parke estate). The path runs along the top edge of the wood - listen out for the River Bovey in the valley below. Eventually pass through a kissing gate into a field; head through the middle to past a DW sign, then straight on through kissing gates in a strip of woodland. Follow the right edge of the next field (look out for Dartmoor ponies - the Dartmoor Pony Heritage Trust has its HQ here), through a gate, then down the track to reach the car park at Parke (home to Dartmoor National Park Authority). **For Home Farm Café turn left.**



Parke is an historic estate in the parish of Bovey Tracey. The present mansion, Parke House, is a Grade 2 listed building situated west of the centre of town on the opposite side of the River Bovey. It was rebuilt in 1826-8 by William Hole and is today the headquarters of Dartmoor National Park Authority.

Turn right; follow the drive past the car park and the DPHT Centre and through a gate by a cattle grid, then turn right through a kissing gate. At a T-junction turn right along a path through woodland, eventually passing through a gate and following the path left to meet the entrance to the Parke estate. Cross the drive to reach the B3387 again; follow the pavement to reach a roundabout on the A382.

Cross the Moretonhampstead road and keep straight on into Bovey Tracey, following signs for Tourist Information and the Heritage Centre. Cross St John's Lane; keep ahead to reach the entrance to Mill Marsh Park opposite Station Road car park. **F**



*Riverside Mill
- home of The
Devon Guild of
Craftsmen*

Bovey Tracey - the 'Gateway to the Moor' - lies just outside the National Park boundary and has expanded enormously over the last few years. The town is home to the Devon Guild of Craftsmen and the Dartmoor National Park offices (see above) and has a good range of eating and drinking establishments. The Heritage Centre is housed in the former railway station. In the English Civil War the Royalists were defeated by the Parliamentarians (under Cromwell and Fairfax) at the Battle of Bovey Heath, 1646, outside the modern town. The town now marks the end of the Wray Valley Trail, a multi-use route which largely follows the trackbed of the old railway line to Moretonhampstead.