

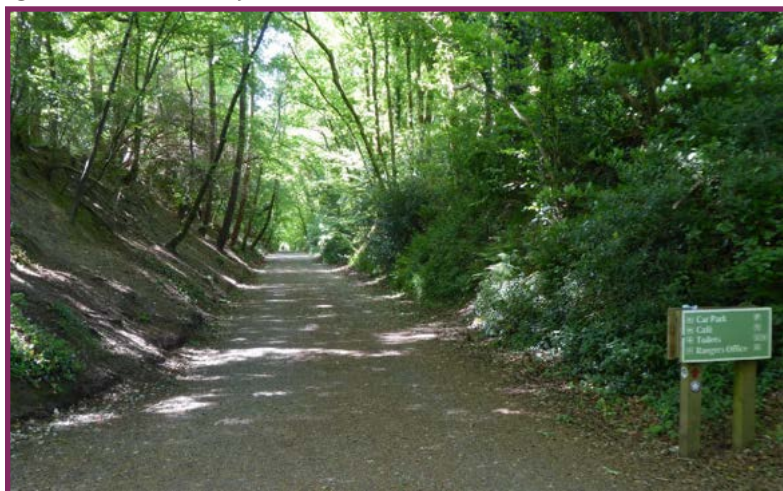


Stage 4: Bovey Tracey to Moretonhampstead

Start	SX 8145 7823 Entrance to Mill Marsh Park, Bovey Bridge, Station Road, Bovey Tracey
Finish	SX 7532 8606 Moretonhampstead Information Centre, New Street
Distance	10.5 miles / 17 km
Total ascent	1,961 ft / 598 m
Refreshments	Bovey Tracey, Parke (off route), Water (off route), North Bovey, Moretonhampstead
Public toilets	Bovey Tracey, Moretonhampstead
Tourist information	Bovey Tracey, Moretonhampstead

Please refer also to the [Stage 4 map](#).

S Follow the surfaced path through Mill Marsh Park (the route is shared with the DW cycle route/Wray Valley Trail to the lower end of Lustleigh) alongside the River Bovey, passing the children's playground. At the end of the park follow DW signs half-right to duck under the A382 at Hole Bridge. Keep ahead to meet the trackbed of the old Newton Abbot/Moretonhampstead railway line and turn right, crossing the River Bovey.



The old railway track through Parke

Elevation Profile



The trail runs along the northeastern edge of the National Trust's Parke estate. It's popular with families, dogs and cyclists, so expect it to be relatively busy.

To visit [Home Farm Café](#) look out for a path signed left, which crosses Parke Bridge then heads uphill to find the café.

The trail becomes quieter towards the northern end of the estate, where glimpses of the moor start to appear. The trail crosses a lane, then descends to meet the Lower Knowle Road via a gate (at the southern end of Lustleigh) just above Yeo Bridge. Head up the lane, soon passing houses, to meet a junction (the Wray Valley Trail goes straight on).

1 Turn left, downhill, passing under an old railway bridge. Cross the Wray Brook on a little granite bridge and pass Ivy Cottage (the lane right goes to Rudge and Sanduck), then cross the River Bovey once more on Drakeford Bridge.

2 Within a few paces turn right on a broad track that leads to a parking area for Pullabrook Woods/East Dartmoor NNR. Pass through a gate and follow the track - signed to the old Manaton road - through the woods, with views across the Bovey valley. [Note that these are working woodlands.](#)

The East Dartmoor Woodlands are jointly owned and administered by Natural England and the Woodland Trust. They are a mix of ancient woodland and wildflower-rich wet meadows nestling in the steep-sided valley of the River Bovey in the dramatic Dartmoor landscape. The area's abundance of wildlife and fascinating flora makes it an enticing destination all year round.

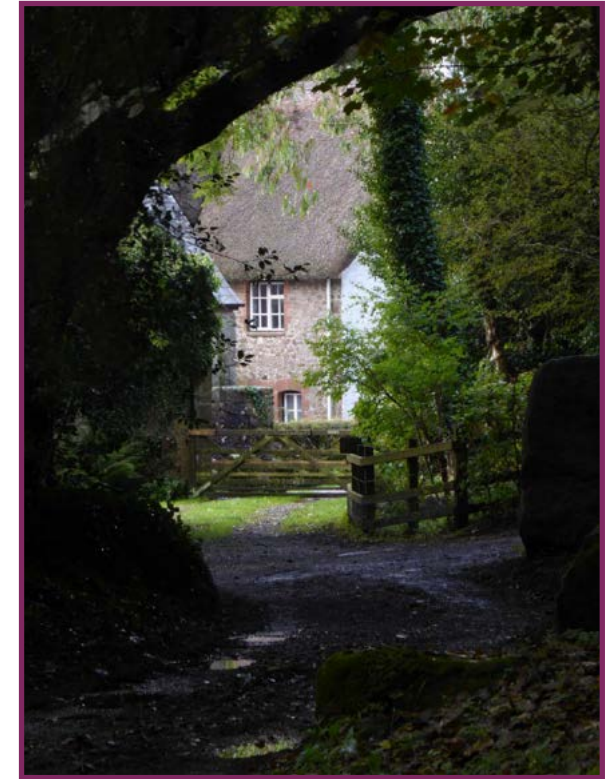
The main track ascends gently through pretty woodland; the swell of Trendlebere Down, with Black Hill beyond, appears through the trees as the river below negotiates a sharp bend. At the end of the wood a short sharp pull up gains a gate and a track T-junction on the edge of bracken-covered Trendlebere Down.

Turn right on the 'old Manaton road' (rough track, wet in places), which descends into the valley, crossing a stream at the bottom where it emerges from a steep-sided combe. Walk on to reach a track junction, where Hisley Bridge (an old granite packsaddle bridge - and a good picnic spot) can be seen through gates to the right. Keep ahead, signed to Manaton. Pass a footbridge over the Becka Brook (a tributary of the Bovey). Eventually the track bears right over Houndtor Bridge to cross the brook by a ford, and passes through a gate into Houndtor Wood. Follow the main track through the lower reaches of a coniferous plantation, ignoring any paths to left and right. Soon ascend more steeply, zigzagging sharp right then left. The track levels, passing a handy seat with lovely views across the valley, then ascends again to reach a T-junction.

The track heading off sharp right here passes near the remains of Houndtor Fort, a single rampart Iron Age hillfort.

3 Turn right, signed to the Bovey Valley. The rough track passes through a gate then ascends steadily between granite-studded hedgebanks, eventually levelling and bearing left by farm buildings, where it becomes surfaced. Hayne Down (the granite stack of Bowerman's Nose sits on the right-hand slope) comes into view ahead, just before the lane bears right.

Meet a lane on a bend (in the hamlet of Water: The Kestor Inn is down the lane to the left) and bear right, soon passing picturesque thatched cottages and bearing right again. At the entrance to Water Mill follow the path left around the perimeter to reach a crossroads of paths. Turn left (to Manaton indirect and Horsham for Lustleigh Cleave) on a woodland track which soon descends and eventually narrows between mossy granite walls. Look right across the valley to spot Hunters Tor, the ridge also crowned with the remains of an Iron Age hillfort.



Water

The path drops to cross a stream and passes a path to Manaton. Keep ahead to reach cottages; follow the path left to find two gates and a path junction. Take the right fork, signed to Horsham Steps and Foxworthy. The path, initially walled, runs through woodland, soon passing through a gate into Neadon Cleave. Descend steeply - you'll need to pick your way carefully downhill - through light woodland, to reach another junction.

Horsham Steps - where granite boulders fill the narrow valley bottom and the River Bovey rushes beneath - is accessed a little further downhill at this point (another good picnic spot).



Horsham Steps is a mass of rounded moss-covered boulders that seem to block the River Bovey below Horsham, but the water still flows through and underneath. In his book *Gems in a Granite Setting* well-known Dartmoor author William Crossing describes the feature as 'Horsham Steps', boulders that 'entirely hide the stream'. A public footpath can be followed across the boulders when river conditions allow.

Turn left, signed to Foxworthy Drive/County Road. This very pretty narrow path weaves through the trees to meet a rough track and path junction via a gate, exiting the East Dartmoor NNR.

4 Turn left, uphill, to reach a lane.

5 Turn right, soon ascending past historic buildings at Neadon Farm (note Neadon Upper Hall, opposite the farmhouse) to a T-junction. Turn right, ascending then dropping into the valley of the River Bovey, which is crossed via two bridges, then climbing again, very steeply. The lane levels by a bridlepath heading off right to Foxworthy Bridge/Lustleigh Cleave.

Buildings at Barnecourt come into view ahead.

6 On meeting a substantial wall corner turn left, signed to Southlands Farm and Barnefield (dead end). Look left for wonderful views towards Easdon Tor. The lane deteriorates to a rough track and descends to cross a stream (Dickford Bridge) marking the North Bovey and Lustleigh boundary. The track undulates between hedgebanks before levelling between fields; the tower of St John's Church in North Bovey comes into view. Pass a ford and stepping stones over the River Bovey and ascend to the green in North Bovey, passing The Ring of Bells Inn.



North Bovey is one of Dartmoor's showcase villages, with picturesque thatched cottages and a pub clustered around the green.

Follow the lane ahead past the thatched village hall. At the junction bear right, uphill, signed to Moretonhampstead. At Pound Cross bear left on an unsigned narrow lane, which soon descends.

7 As the lane starts to bear slightly left turn right over a stile into a field. Bear half-left across the field, heading for a stile that can be seen in the hedge. Keep in the same direction across the next field (great views to Bovey Castle and the eastern reaches of the moor), to pass through two gates (by a pen) in the top corner.



The landscape near Moretonhampstead

Turn left, and through another gate. Keep along the left edge of the next field - Moretonhampstead, nestled beneath Mardon Down, comes into view - at the end crossing a stile onto a lane. Turn right; within a few yards turn left down a hedged track, which leads via a gate into a field. Head down the left edge of two fields, bearing right at the bottom to cross a stile. Head straight across the next field and through a gate. In the next field parallel the left hedge; cross a small stile by a footpath sign onto a track, to the right of farm buildings.

Turn left to pass stables, then right through a gate into a sloping field. Follow the fence downhill and over a stile. Descend more steeply, bearing right at the bottom across level ground to cross two stiles onto a narrow path alongside a stream. Head uphill to meet the road on the edge of Moretonhampstead.

Turn right (initially there's no pavement); pick up the pavement opposite the Moretonhampstead Motor Museum. Cross Betton Way at the small roundabout and head down Court Street. Moretonhampstead Information Centre will be found on New Street in the centre of the town. **F**



The ancient market town of Moretonhampstead is known as the 'gateway to the High Moor', and is a bustling little place on the main west-east transmoor route. Its market charter was granted by King John in AD1207, at a rent of one sparrowhawk per year; the bird has become a symbol for the town. In recent years the town has seen the development of Green Hill, a gallery and heritage centre in the Victorian school by St Andrew's Church, and the Moretonhampstead Motor Museum on Court Street. The town also marks the end of the multi-use Wray Valley Trail (from Bovey Tracey).