



Stage 5: Moretonhampstead to Chagford

Start	SX 532 8606 Moretonhampstead Visitor Information Centre, New Street
Finish	SX 7004 8755 The Square, Chagford
Distance	8 miles / 12.75 km
Total ascent	1,519 ft / 463 m
Refreshments	Moretonhampstead, Fingle Bridge, Castle Drogo, Dogmarsh Bridge, Sandy Park (off route), Chagford
Public toilets	Moretonhampstead, Fingle Bridge, Chagford
Tourist information	Moretonhampstead

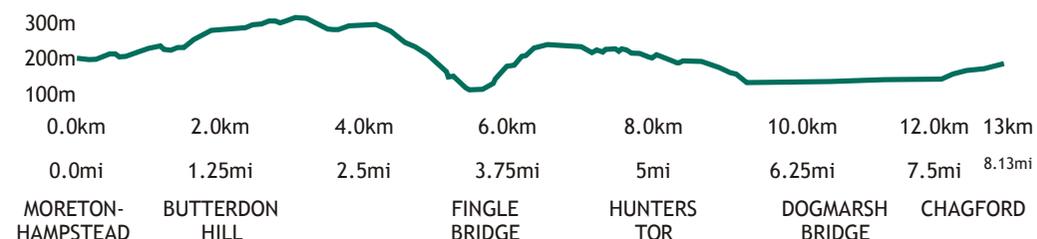
Please refer also to the Stage 5 map.

S With your back to the Information Centre turn left. Cross Ford Street and turn left. Pass the entrance to the allotments; immediately past Moretonhampstead Hospital cross the road ahead (Embleford Crescent) then head straight up Fordlands (Queen's Road) between houses.

At the top of the hill, where the road bears sharp right, keep ahead down a narrow, rocky, sometimes wet hedged footpath. Pass through a gate at the bottom, then head up the left edge of two fields to meet a gate and path junction. Moretonhampstead is very quickly left behind as views towards Mardon Down open up to the right.

Pass through the gate, up big granite steps and round another gate. Follow the fenced path above Coombe Court Farm, and through another gate. Continue past a small meadow, then into woodland and alongside a stream. After the next gate the path narrows between banks, becomes rockier and climbs steadily. At the top meet the drive to Hill Cottages and keep straight on to meet a lane on a bend.

Elevation Profile



Near Moretonhampstead

1 Keep left, where the lane bears sharp right turn left down the drive to Butterdon Cottage. Pass between the house and a barn conversion and through a gate onto the lower edge of Butterdon Hill. There are usually cattle grazing on Butterdon and the right of way, which runs along the lower edge, is likely to be churned up, so pick your way along as best you can. Pass a signed footpath heading off left, and then a bridleway, then a standing stone. Look out for a path sign on the left; here turn left over a stile. Follow the left edge of three fields to reach the lane at Cranbrook (note the old linhay just to the right).

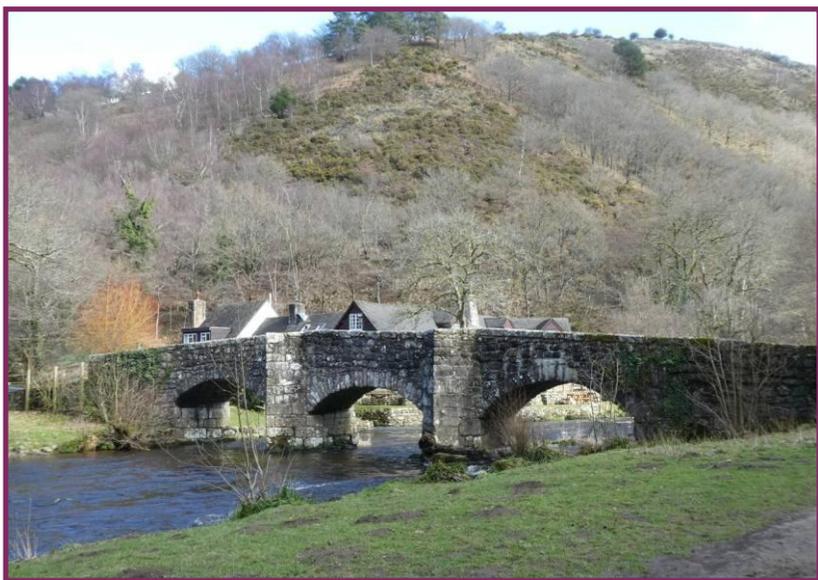
2 Turn left and follow the lane uphill.

3 Look out for a track on the right by a clump of hazel, and turn right on a public byway by a C M D boundary stone a few paces later.

After 100yd a gate on the left gives access to Cranbrook Castle Iron Age hillfort - you'll need to come back out the same way.

Cranbrook Castle, an Iron Age hillfort, overlooks the River Teign from its elevated position on top of Cranbrook Down. The hillfort, dating from some time after 500BC, is roughly square and is defined by a single bank and ditch. There are fabulous views over the Teign Gorge to north and east, and over Dartmoor to south and west. Cranbrook Castle is one of three hillforts along this stretch of the River Teign. Visible across the gorge is Prestonbury Castle, while a mile or two to the east, on the south side of the valley, is Wooston Castle.

The track heads downhill, steepening and zigzagging into the valley to meet a track alongside the River Teign at Fingle Bridge (at one point on the descent a seat affords a fantastic view up the wooded Teign Gorge towards Castle Drogo). Turn left, then cross the bridge to pass the Fingle Bridge Inn and head up the lane.



FingleBridge



Teign Gorge

4 After 200yd turn sharp left, climbing steeply through beautiful oak woodland. It's a long and steady ascent, but well worth it! At the top emerge into the open to join the Hunter's Path, which comes in from the right. Keep ahead along the top edge of the Teign gorge, with stunning views upvalley towards the open moor. Reach a path junction and keep straight on, now sharing the route with the Two Moors Way (paths further on give access to Castle Drogo and tearoom)

Castle Drogo is a country house and 'mixed revivalist castle' in a spectacular position above the Teign Gorge. Constructed between 1911 and 1930, it was the last 'castle' to be built in England. The client was Julius Drewe, the hugely successful founder of the Home and Colonial Stores. Drewe chose the site in the belief that it formed part of the lands of his supposed medieval ancestor, Drogo de Teigne. The architect he chose to realise his dream was Edwin Lutyens, then at the height of his career. Lutyens lamented Drewe's determination to have a castle but nevertheless produced one of his finest buildings. Castle Drogo was given to the National Trust in 1974, the first 20th-century building that the Trust acquired.

The path runs across the top of Sharp Tor, with spectacular views, then passes below the Castle. Look out for Dartmoor ponies, kept here for conservation grazing. Soon Hunter's Tor comes into view ahead, hanging on the side of the gorge, with the little town of Chagford in the distance.

Eventually, where a small gate leading to the Hunter's Tor viewpoint appears ahead, follow the path sharp right. Drop to reach a gate onto a surfaced track.

5 Turn left. Where the track forks keep left, then pass to the left of the thatched Gibhouse and descend along the edge of woodland to meet the River Teign by a suspension bridge.

If you cross the bridge you can take a look at the immense stonework of the wall enclosing Whiddon Park (Deer Park).

Turn right, passing through a gate into riverside meadows. Follow the river to reach the road by Dogmarsh Bridge via a kissing gate; the Mill End Hotel appears on the other side of the bridge. Cross the road with care, pass through a gate and cross the field, soon re-entering woodland via a footbridge.

A few paces later a path bearing off right can be taken to reach the Sandy Park Inn.

Follow the riverside path on - the river is really pretty here - to pass through a gate into fields.

Along this path keep an eye out for 'Granite Song', a sculpture situated on a private island in the middle of the river. This was created by internationally renowned local sculptor Peter Randall-Page in 1991.



Keep along the riverside edge of the first field and halfway across the second, then bear half-right past an upright stone to find a gate. Pass between barns and the farmhouse at Rushford Mill Farm to meet the lane.

Turn left, soon crossing Rushford Bridge (the Two Moors Way turns right just before the bridge). Follow the lane uphill to a T-junction; turn right and head towards the centre of Chagford. Pass The Courtyard to reach The Pepperpot (old market house) in The Square and the official end of the stage. **F**



Chagford's fortunes have been built on tin (it was one of the original stannary towns), wool and now tourists, drawn by its attractive streets and range of good shops, including the treasure-trove store of Bowdens on The Square. The 'Pepper Pot' - the octagonal market house - was built in 1862 by Revd George Hayter Hames, who was also responsible for bringing gas and a proper water supply to the town. Today Chagford continues to flourish as an arts venue, with a biannual book festival and annual music and film festivals.