



Walk 31. Brendon Common.

- 6 miles, ascents and descents of 180 metres. 2 hours 20 minutes continuous walking, allow 3-3½ hours.

Terrain: Tracks and moorland, with two usually shallow fords. ! Open moorland: the main walk includes some mild yomping over rough and possibly boggy ground, and a return on the road; a compass or GPS is needed. The shorter walk is all on paths and tracks.

Access: By car. Start from the Middle Hill parking area on the B3223 between Simonsbath and Hillsford Bridge (SS 759 452). Coming from Simonsbath, the parking area is on the right 1.3 miles after the cattle grid (Brendon Two Gates), marked by a brideway sign for Malmsmead. From Hillsford Bridge, ascend through sharp bends, go over the cattle grid, and the parking area is on the left soon after Dry Bridge.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

Refreshments: None on the route. There is a good choice in the area including in Lynmouth, Barbrook, Rockford, Simonsbath and seasonally at Watersmeet.

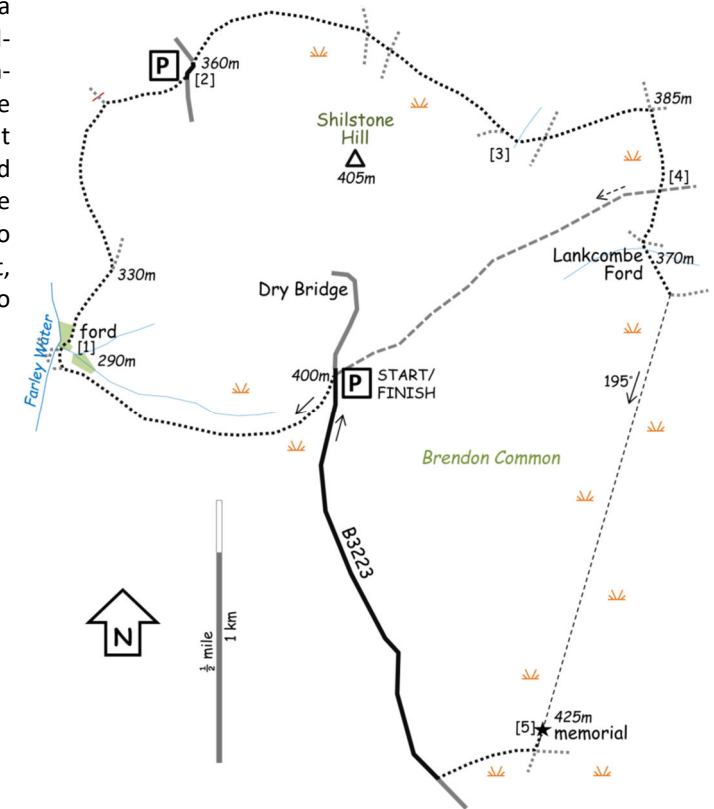
THIS SHORT UPLAND WALK EXPLORES THE MOORLAND AROUND BRENDON COMMON, Shilstone Hill and Farley Hill, an area that feeds part of the East Lyn river system. This is a popular spot for motorists to stop and enjoy the scenery in the summer, but few stray more than ten minutes or so from the road. The ford at Farley Water is a hidden oasis of babbling streams and small trees in this otherwise moorland landscape. Later on in the walk you will be far from roads or habitation.

From the car park turn left and cross the road, joining an unmarked grassy path that bears away at a shallow angle to the right. Cross the head of a valley then veer right to follow its length. The path loses height as it nears the valley bottom; ahead of you is Cheriton Ridge, followed in walk 20. Keep right when the path forks, heading between two bracken-covered knolls. This will bring you to a small fast-flowing river, Farley Water, one of the tributaries of the East Lyn. Turn right at this idyllic spot and soon cross a smaller stream using a ford (20mins, [1]). Follow the path quite steeply uphill until you come to the corner of a wall. Turn left here and follow the grassy path close to the wall. Ignore the gates through the wall. After the second gate bear right ('Brendon Common') to keep parallel with a ditch and post-and-wire fence, continuing until you come to a parking area (40mins, [2]).

Turn left on the road at a cattle grid sign. As the road bends left continue ahead on a broad track. This soon loses definition; keep ahead, making first for a small hummock of gorse then a short post. Head for the right-hand end of a line of small trees ahead of you; bear right just before them and follow a rough path towards another line of trees on a sloping ridge. Join a fenceline at the trees, then when it bends left at a gate continue straight ahead. The path becomes stony and descends to a small gully (1hr, [3]). Continue ahead (slightly to the left, not sharp left along the fenceline) on a bearing of 080°. To the left you will be able to see

across the East Lyn valley and on to the Bristol Channel and (on a clear day) South Wales. In a little over five minutes a wide track crosses: turn right here. Five minutes later come to a signposted crossing (1hr10mins, [4]): the main walk continues ahead, while the right turn, on a vehicle-width track, will take you back to the road and your car. If the ground is waterlogged the short version is advised (total ● 4.1 miles, ascents and descents of 135 metres).

To continue the main walk, carry on to Lankcombe Ford and start to follow the path up the other side, to the left. Just before the path turns sharp left, turn right on a grassy track. Your destination is a memorial stone just over a mile away across the moor on a bearing of 195°. Use the compass to head in the right direction (or set your GPS waypoint to SS 7667 4377), but follow paths and pony tracks to make the going easier; the ground can be waterlogged and there may be plenty of bracken. The monument will soon come into view on a slight saddle below a shallow hill in the far distance. You will need to descend slightly into the intervening valley, so if you are using a compass be sure to take a bearing before losing sight of it. The memorial (1hr50mins, [5]) commemorates Colonel R H (Bob) Maclaren of the Royal Engineers, who died here in a rocket accident in 1941. From the stone, bear slightly to the right on a grassy path for a minute or so (you are heading fractionally right of Brendon Two Gates, the cattle grid on the road). Turn right when you meet a broad crossing path. In around five minutes this will bring you to the B3223; turn right on to it, and in a mile come back to your starting-point.



Near Farley Water



© Stan Lester 2020-23. Last recce 8/2023. Please email editor@exmoorwalker.uk with any updates or comments.

This route description is provided freely and in good faith. You are welcome to use, copy and distribute it for personal and non-profit purposes (attribution—non-commercial—no derivatives). No responsibility is taken for any errors or omissions, or for your navigation or safety on the walk. Introductory and safety information at exmoorwalker.uk.