



Walk 37. Pinkery Pond and Moles Chamber.

- 5.9 miles, ascents and descents of 215 metres. 2 hours 20 minutes constant walking, allow 3-3½ hours.

Terrain: ! Open moorland plus paths and tracks. The moorland navigation is not difficult, but be prepared for some boggy areas particularly in winter.

Access: Park in the layby on the B3358 where the Macmillan Way crosses (SS 728 401); from Simonsbath this is a large unmarked layby on the right, 2.8 miles west of the village. No bus service.

Map: OS Explorer OL9 Exmoor.

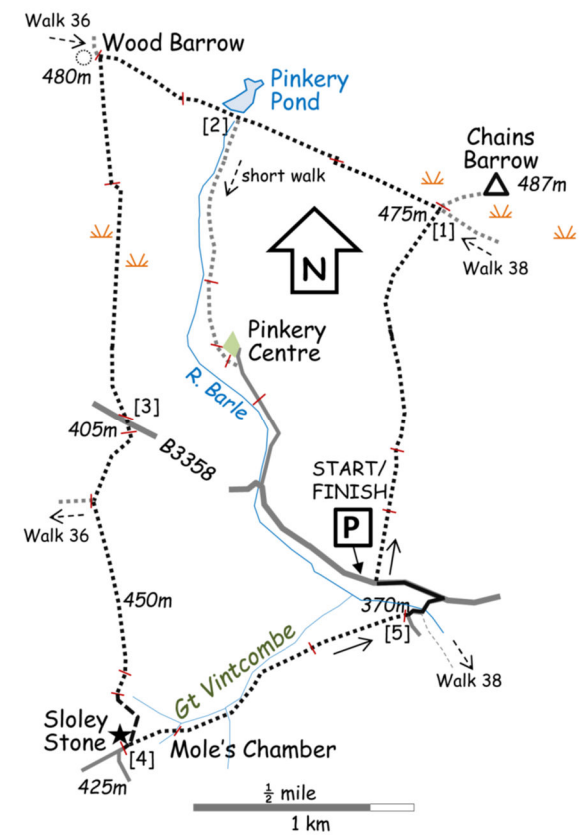
Refreshments: None on the route. Inns and seasonal tea rooms in Simonsbath and Chalcacombe.

PINKERY POND IS A SMALL RESERVOIR ON THE 'CHAINS', a boggy moorland plateau high up in western Exmoor. It was created by local landowner John Knight in around 1830 by damming the headwaters of the River Barle. Its purpose has been puzzling, but recent research suggests that it was built to supply a canal intended for tub boats to transport lime and fertiliser as part of Knight's misguided attempts to make the moorland suitable for crops. Today it is a remote and tranquil place particularly outside the summer months. The walk also visits the Sloley or Slowly Stone, a boundary stone inscribed in 1742, and Mole's Chamber, according to local legend an area of bog in which a farmer called Mole disappeared along with his horse (more prosaically it was probably a small dwelling). The route links to walk 38 for a longer circuit that also takes in Simonsbath and the source of the River Exe.

Start the walk at the layby on the B3358 (SS 728 401). At the Simonsbath end of the layby turn left through a gate on a permissive bridleway to the Chains, keeping to the right-hand side of the field. After the second gate continue ahead over the moorland, your way marked by the occasional blue-topped post. Cross a ditch and bank, the remains of John Knight's abortive canal. Arriving at a gate (35mins, [1]) the main walk turns left, but you may first want to follow the path to Chains Barrow. Returning to the main route continue along the boundary until reaching a wall; go through a gate on the right and carry on with the field boundary now on your left, soon arriving at Pinkery Pond (45mins, [2]). After exploring, continue across the dam, go through a gate and follow a vague grassy path slightly to the right (the bearing is 300°). Come to a barrow (burial mound) with a gate and a lone thorn tree in front. Turn left here. Keep the field boundary on your right for the next 20 minutes or so until you reach a gate on to a road after some sheep pens (1hr20mins, [3]); after the crossing

hedge the best route is about 50 metres left of the boundary, where there is a well-defined track that avoids the worst of the bog).

Cross the road carefully and go through a gate, then along the path to a line of trees. Continue uphill; at the signpost, carry on towards Mole's Chamber, keeping close to the wire fence on your right. Descending to a bank, go through the rightmost of two pedestrian gates, then shortly afterwards through another gate to continue on an enclosed track. Just before a road junction note a boundary stone, like a gravestone, on the right; this is the Sloley or Slowly stone (1hr45mins, [4]). Turn left here on to a signposted bridleway which descends gradually into the valley, splashing across a stream to go through a gate. This stony hill path takes you above Great Vintcombe before coming to a field gate. Continue slightly to the left here, gradually losing height to arrive at another gate. Turn left on the farm drive (2hr5mins, [5]). If you are continuing to walk 38 turn right on a path to Cornham Ford, otherwise cross the bridge, walk up to the road and turn left to arrive back at the layby.



Short walk to Pinkery Pond (● 3.3 miles, ascents and descents of 100 metres). Start as for the main walk but at Pinkery Pond turn left through a gate on a path signposted to Goat Hill Bridge. This takes you alongside the Barle and through a gate in a tree-topped bank. Cross the field, keeping just right of the wind turbine, then follow the path below the Pinkery centre. Turn right on to its drive to come to the B3358. Turn left, and arrive back at the layby in less than ten minutes.

Linked walks. This walk can easily be linked with **walk 38** for a longer circuit (including some poorly defined paths on boggy moorland) that includes Simonsbath and Exe Head (● 11.5 miles with ascents and descents of 400 metres). See walk 38 for the details. It can also be joined with **walk 36** from Chalcacombe for an 11 or 13.7 mile circuit.

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* Pinkery is incorrectly spelt Pinkworthy on some maps; the name derives from the Celtic *pen cerrig* or *pen creagh*, a rough headland, rather than a nonexistent Pink's *worthig* or smallholding.

