

## Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> September “Darting up the Valley - Marching across the Moor” with Jon Roseway

A small group of us met in Venford Reservoir on this glorious autumnal day. The sun was out, the sky blue and it was a great temperature for walking. Heading off along the rim of the Dart Valley we marveled at the beautiful views across the valley to Sharp Tor and beyond.



Rowan berries were ripening in the trees as we ventured along a footpath into an area of small woodland. Stepping over a fallen tree we came out into an area of open heathland and some rather splendid red heifers grazing beside a small clapper bridge over a stream. We passed several trees dripping with moss, as we continued on our route past the remains of ancient hut circles towards Combestone with its farmhouse and barns. Here we met some more cows quietly grazing in an area with outstanding views of the moors around them. We continued along the pathway heading for Combestone Tor where we had a coffee break surrounded by more magnificent views.



Next we headed out across Holne Moor towards the restored Horn's Cross.



Passing various boundary markers we came across small groups of horses enjoying their freedom on the moor. We passed through areas of old tin workings on our way back catching a lovely view of Venford Reservoir.



Skirting our way through the gorse we headed for a pathway at the side of the reservoir where we had our picnic lunch. Refreshed we headed past the reservoir and northwards up to Bench Tor catching glimpses of Haytor in the distance. Here we were treated to even more wonderful panoramic views. We couldn't resist climbing to the top of the tor and looking down into the valley below and glimpsing the Mel and Sharrah pools.





We then followed a footpath that descended into a picturesque woodland area with very steep slopes down into the river valley below. Although we could hear the river flowing we only caught the odd view of it far below. The hillside to one side of us was covered with mounds of moss and lichens, and may form part of the Coastal Temperate Rainforest biome.



As we made our way out of the woods we crossed the Venford Brook on our way back to the cars.

A lovely day out on Dartmoor, thank you Jon for devising such an interesting walk that we all enjoyed immensely.

Stella French