



Walk 6 – 7.1 miles: A Walk to a Mysterious Stone

This is a rough moorland walk starting and finishing in Cornwood, taking in Shell Top, Penn Beacon, Broadall Lake, Bronze Age enclosures and a mysterious carved stone. Should only be attempted in good weather and with OS map / app and compass.

Walks are undertaken at your own risk. **Please follow the countryside code and leave no trace. It is the responsibility of the walker not to trespass, cause damage or upset livestock.** Remember that livestock are kept in the open fields and on the open moor so dogs should be kept on leads. Some pathways can be muddy and therefore, suitable footwear should be worn. But don't worry if you do get muddy shoes/boots, muddy boots are still welcome in the Cornwood Inn.... and it will clean off! We recommend you carry OS Explorer map 28 (Dartmoor) or have the OS app on your phone if venturing off the roads and onto the moor.

General Information

This is a moorland walk into a remote location. Sturdy boots are recommended and the walk **should only be attempted in good visibility weather and not be undertaken without a map and compass or suitable GPS navigation tool** (and the knowledge of how to use them!!). South of the Rosalie Stone lies an area of extremely wet ground, do not attempt to cross this dangerously boggy area.

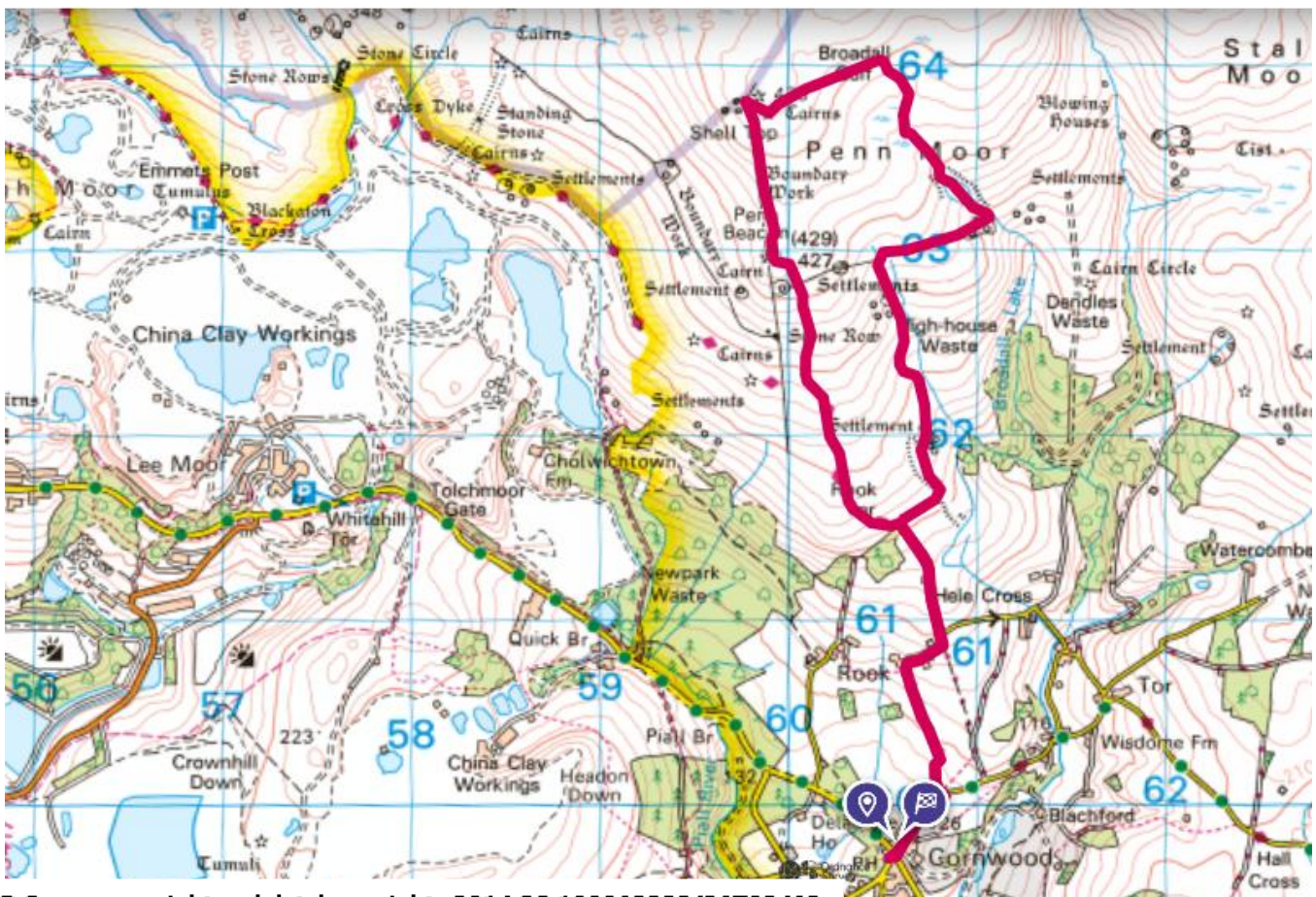
Length: 7.1 miles / 11.5km

Ascent: 1300ft / 396m

Grade: Moderately difficult / strenuous. Open terrain demanding navigation skills. Wet feet are a distinct possibility!

Approximate time: Allow 3 hours at a moderate pace

QR code to the map on [explore.OSmaps.com](https://www.explore.osmaps.com)





Walk Description

Park in Cornwood village and take the Harford road from the village square, then turn left in 0.5km up Rook Lane and follow the road past Middle and East Rook farms. A leat running down the side of the road is met at a bend. At the T junction go straight up the hill and cross the leat onto a rocky track. Follow the track to East Rook moor gate. Once on the open moor walk northwards following a quad bike track alongside the field wall.



Shortly the wall falls away to the right, continue following the quad track. A gully is met as the field wall bends back towards the track. Cross the gully and follow a quad track slightly uphill on the right hand side of the gully. Just after the ground steepens follow any suitable path which takes you in a direction parallel with the wall but about 100m to the west of the wall. Aim for the top end of a patch of boulders which runs right up to the field wall. Immediately before the boulder field are the remains of a Bronze Age enclosure containing a hut circle. Another hut circle lies just north of the enclosure wall. The ruinous

state of these features is probably due to the field wall builders treating them as a convenient source of stone. Follow the general direction of the field wall sticking to ground to the west of the wall to avoid rough underfoot condition closer to the wall. You may come across more ruined hut circles as you head north. When the wall on your right goes through a right angle, bend to the right (GR605629). Initially walk around the top side of a boggy area before following the field boundary wall eastwards.

After crossing the course of an old leat (now dry) the wall on your right descends the slope and lower down shows a distinct wiggle. This wall is a rebuild on top of a Bronze Age boundary wall (locally called reaves) and the kinks in the walls path are due to it skirting round Bronze Age enclosures on the other side of the wall. It is part of quite an exceptional reave system, a combination of wall and reave can be traced continuously from here right round the shoulder of Penn Beacon and up into the Plym valley. In places the reave disappears under the peat indicating that the majority of peat growth now on Dartmoor has taken place since the Bronze Age. Keep following the wall eastwards until a small stream (Broadall Lake) is reached. Two watercourses are apparent which join higher up the valley. The challenge now is to follow the stream almost to its source. The ground between the two streams makes for the best underfoot conditions. The stream bed has been much disturbed by medieval tin streaming along most of its course. Continue upstream until the ground flattens out to reveal Broadall Gulf moor behind Broadall Head (assumed to be the flat area through which the stream flows). Just after the vista opens up, on the left hand side of the tin stream workings the low wall of the remains of building can be found, in too good a condition to be Bronze Age, much more likely to have been built by tin streamers. The building is not marked on the OS map, nor is it mentioned in Jeremy Butler's (usually extremely comprehensive) atlas of antiquities.

Keep following the course of the stream as best you can, heading towards a rising slope and a patch of shorter grass with some natural boulders on the left hand side of the shorter grass. The stream now is quite small and has a habit of disappearing under an overgrowth of peat. Go right up to boulders / grass area and cross the stream at a small ford. Walk left for a 100m or so to an area where a depression intrudes into the rising ground (GR605640). There are large granite boulders at the top of the rise above the back of the depression. Find the one that has "ROSALIE" carved into it. Nobody seems to know who carved this or when. The carving itself is of reasonably quality to it was probably done by somebody familiar with stone carving. The lack of weathering indicates it is probably less than 100 years old, but who Rosalie was remains a mystery.



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From here there is a choice of return routes. Either return by following the outward route in reverse or (longer) take the following option. Walk along the top edge of the rise until (after a few 100m) you meet a patch of shorter grass at the head of another depression. Now follow a compass bearing of 250deg for 0.7km. The ground is featureless but eventually a very small but distinctive granite tor should appear. This is 150m south



east of Shell Top. The rocky outcrop is surrounded by a Bronze Age cairn and retaining stone circle.

Make your way to Shell Top, this is another example of an outcrop being used as a Bronze Age cairn. The remains of a retaining stone circle are visible on the eastern side. Follow the path and reave (easier going at last!) to the large cairn on Penn Beacon summit. A quad track lies just east of the summit; follow this downhill to East Rook Gate moor gate at GR606615. Take the rough track, cross the leat and then follow the road back to Cornwood.

Congratulate yourself on surviving and contemplate the mystery of the "ROSALIE" stone over a drink in the pub!

