

Walk of the Month

The Hurlers and The Cheesewring, Minions, Bodmin Moor

Distance: 4 miles (with the option to explore further).

Map: Ordnance Survey Explorer 109

Start: Hurlers Car Park (Grid Ref SX 260711)

Character: This walk has everything - beautiful scenery, archaeological sites, and fascinating remains of mining and quarrying activities. Physically, the walk is undemanding except for the scramble up to Stowe's Pound and around the Cheesewring, both of which could be omitted. But, to do so, would mean missing terrific views. We recommend that you use a compass to follow the directions, and take care - beware that old industrial areas can be dangerous – there are deep pools and hidden shafts etc.

Start the walk by climbing the granite steps in the north-west corner of the car park. Continue in a north-westerly direction, along the old industrial track, passing the Hurlers stone circles on your right. Remain on the obvious track without being tempted by any side-tracks and, after 0.8 miles, where the track splits 3 ways, take the left hand track that heads WNW, then north, towards an old quarry. The area to your left is called Craddock Moor and, for those interested in Paganism, it is worth taking a stroll around this area. With luck, you may locate a stone circle, although it isn't easy to locate because all of the stones have fallen over. Half a mile to the west lies a stone row which is also difficult to find amid the long grass. Large numbers (c.500) of golden plover winter in this area, and make quite a spectacle when they take flight, in unison.

Upon reaching the disused quarry, have a wander around the spoils, taking care not to go too close to the edge of the water-filled pit. Looking east from here you will notice, just below you, some fields enclosed by stone walls. This area is private land so, to get up to Stowe's Pound which is visible across the valley, you will need to skirt around to the right (south) of these fields. Witheybrook Marsh prevents you from taking the left (northern) route around the fields.

From the quarry, your next objective is the boundary stone on the southern corner of the enclosure. Descend towards it and, upon reaching it, bear left, keeping the wall on your left. Cross the deep gully which was once part of the Witheybrook Mine and, on the far side of the gully, head for the left end of the rocky hill ahead of you. Seek out a path that climbs through the bracken up to the ridge, which is crowned by a massive prehistoric stronghold called Stowe's Pound, built about 5500 years ago.

The views east from here encompass Kit Hill and Dartmoor in the distance with the lovely hamlet of Henwood just below, whilst Plymouth Sound can be seen to the south. After pausing to enjoy the view, make your way carefully to the right (south)

This walk has been researched and compiled by Bodmin Visitor Information Centre. 'Gold' award winners at the 2009 Cornwall Tourism Awards- Best Tourist information Centre. For further information on this walk, refer to OS Map No 109. For details of other walks in the area, please speak to a member of staff. With compliments, Bodmin Visitor Information Centre ☎ 01208 76616.

of the summit, and round to The Cheesewring, an unusual geological granite formation.

Now descend carefully with a wire fence on your left and follow the fence round the outside of the Cheesewring quarry. Descend to the track which runs left to the quarry entrance. It's worth taking a look inside the quarry before re-tracing your steps and heading towards the TV mast on Caradon Hill, along the track that was once the tramway that served the quarry. On your left you will see the preserved engine house and buildings of the Prince of Wales Shaft. In its hey-day the lode here was developed to a depth of 353m below the surface, with the principal product being copper. It finally closed in 1914.

Reaching a gate, bear right away from the track to another preserved engine house, Houseman's Shaft. This is now the Minions Heritage Centre, an excellent and well researched exhibition detailing the mining industry and local history of Bodmin Moor and the area surrounding Minions. There is no entry fee and it is always open.

Finally, head due west across disturbed ground towards another engine house on the skyline and you will find yourself at The Hurlers, three stone circles in a line. They date from about 1500 BC and are named for the medieval legend that they were men turned to stone for hurling (a Celtic game) on a Sunday.

From here turn South and you will pick up one of the paths back to the car park.

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