

ROUTE: Long walk. Start Ivybridge Train Station. Harford Bridge, Burford Down (optional), Stalldown, Erme Circle, New Waste. Finish Ivybridge Train Station. Distance 20km.

SITES OF INTEREST: Burford, Stalldown and Erme Stone Rows and Cairns

PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Train to and from Ivybridge.

## **Ivybridge 2: West Erme: Burford, Stalldown and Erme Rows and Cairns**

### **Introduction**

*This is a long walk and it seems sensible to suggest alternative routes which are either easier or shorter. The main attraction to walking the west side of the River Erme is that there are 3 stone rows over half a kilometre long, namely; the Burford, Stalldown and the Upper Erme stone rows (to the east of the River Erme there is another long row on Butterdon Hill). From Ivybridge the Burford and Stalldown rows require walking up the west of the River Erme. The Upper Erme Row and the associated Dancers cairn circle could be approached by the easier walk on the east side of the River Erme but this requires crossing the River Erme near Erme pound or further up beyond Red Lake. Crossing the river at Erme Pound requires either hopping across slippery stones or physically wading across (you do this at your own risk!). For those wishing to avoid such a crossing the walk on the west is necessary.*

*The following suggested route is based on an amalgamation of walks done by the author combined with suggested routes taken from the Plymouth Ramblers website and a Guardian Walking Guide. This route can of course be adapted. It is probably much easier to walk on to Stalldown Barrow from New Waste (especially true for those with a car) instead of from Harford Bridge, this avoids the steep climb to Tristis Rock but of course misses the Burford row. At New Waste join the main track approaching the SWW Water Treatment Works, head south to skirt east below the Treatment Works to come out on the moor on the main track. For an easy walk just to the Erme circle, skipping Stalldown Row, just stick to the track which hugs the contour around Stalldown Barrow and pick up the route along the River Erme suggested below.*

### **Ivybridge Train Station to Ivybridge Viaduct**

Start at Ivybridge Train Station and head to the Ivybridge Aqueduct. The road from Ivybridge train station drops down on to the Exeter Road (B3213), head west (to the right) for 1.5km into Ivybridge. Cross the Erme by road in Ivybridge and head north up Station Road with the river on the right hand side. Station Road has a sharp bend to the left with a clearly signposted footpath into the woods off to the right. Follow the footpath up to the Ivybridge Viaduct.

Note: The only other route out of Ivybridge train station is the footpath that heads west on to Cole Lane. Harford Road crosses Cole Lane. The right turn leads north over Stowford Bridge to the start point for the Two Moors Way - the route for walks on the east side of the Erme. The left turn down hill connects up with the road over the Erme in Ivybridge described above.

## **Ivybridge Viaduct to Harford Bridge**

From Ivybridge viaduct stick to the main river side path for about 2km. This is a very pleasant route with a few stiles along the way. The path comes out into a clearing looking up to the west on to Hanger Down. From here the route can get a little muddy and the path is not clearly signposted. Eventually you will meet a wall with a gap in it ([SX631589](#)). Do not pass through the wall but instead follow the wall up hill due west for just over 100m until you approach a hedge on a high bank with trees dotted along the hedge. Keep to the river side of this hedge and head approximately due north along this muddy stretch through to the next field. (NOTE. This area is within the eastern tip of Hanger Down which is public access so if you are uncertain as to whether you are still on the path then you still have a right of way). After crossing a field or two, pass diagonally through King's Wood plantation and head north keeping King's Wood just to your right. Keep heading northwards across the next field, the King's Barn can be clearly seen as an old well preserved building down hill on the right. The footpath now crosses a little stream to a gate, there are small granite blocks on the right hand side against the wall that make crossing the stream easy. Go through the gate and follow the path to reach the road near Hall Farm. Now head along the minor road towards Harford Bridge.

## **Harford Bridge to Stalldown Barrow**

Just before Harford Bridge there is a permissive footpath on the left heading north along the river. Head a short distance along this path through the woods. Exit the woods via a gate in the dry stone wall. There is a steep climb directly up hill on to Burford Down. The climb is very steep and there is no way of avoiding this unless you use very rough animal tracks through gorse and bracken. At Tristis Rock there are settlements and cairns. Around 90m to the west is the cairn circle that heads the Burford Down stone row. Follow the stone row due north down hill. Keep heading north with a dry stone wall just to your left. To get into Yardsworthy Waste requires going through a gap in a dry stone wall. For more on this, there is a useful description of most of this route with useful photographs on the Plymouth Ramblers website, see links below.

Continue north to meet the track that heads west round to the SWW Water Treatment Works. Near to where you meet the track there will be settlements ([SX637613](#)). From the Water Treatment Works Stalldown Row should be clearly seen in the distance up hill on Stalldown Barrow. It is easy to mistake the stones as a row of walkers in the distance! This is the largest stone row on Dartmoor in terms of the sheer size of the stones used in its

construction. Follow the row up the ridge of the hill to the cairn which touches the row on the right. From here the Hillson's House cairn should be clearly visible a few hundred metres to the East. From Hillson's House return to the row and head due north.

## **Stalldown Barrow to Erme Circle and to New Waste**

From Stalldown row you can go directly north to get to the Erme circle. It can get a bit boggy near Blatchford Bottom so it is worth veering east towards the tinner's huts south of Bledge Brook. The Guardian Walk (see links below) has an excellent detailed route which involves dropping down hill from Stalldown row, heading east to the tinner's huts and then SE to Downing's House ([SX639630](#)) and then heading north, initially on the wide track, up to the Erme circle. This avoids the boggy area as well as including some items of interest. The suggested route then skirts SW from Erme Circle following the contours on Stall Moor to Yealm Steps and then south back to New Waste.

## **New Waste to Ivybridge Viaduct via Hanger Down**

If starting from the SWW Water Treatment Works then head SW along the path towards the car park. From the path near the car park head due south to find the gate that enters into the New Waste area from the south. There is a path that heads southwards through Grange Plantation that links to the path to Hall Cross. Alternatively head about 100m east along the main track (almost a gravelly road) in the direction of Yardsworthy farm to take a right along the main track south along the edge of Grange Plantation to Hall Cross.

The track crosses the Harford Road and continues south on to Hanger Down. Head for the Hanger Down Clump and then SE for the route on to Henlake Down and round to the Ivybridge Viaduct for the return back to Ivybridge train station. This section of the route is described in more detail on the Plymouth Ramblers link below.

## **Alternative Routes & Erme Pound**

The main choice, starting from Ivybridge Aqueduct, is whether to head for New Waste over Hanger Down or to head for Harford Bridge by walking up along the river. There is another obvious possibility which is to start on the east side of the Erme and cross to the west at Harford Bridge.

As already mentioned it is possible to cross the Erme to get to Erme Pound at the point where the Erme row crosses the river. This crossing may not be practical for many walkers - although it is probably easier further north beyond Red Lake. Once on the east of the Erme the return journey is via the old railway trackway. From the southern most Erme settlement just above Stony Bottom there is a route marked on the OS Leisure (OL28) map which heads SSE (or 160° to be precise) to join the trackway. However, this route may involve a 1km trek over difficult rough tussocky terrain. Once back on the trackway it is easy going.

## Useful Links

[Plymouth Ramblers: Ivybridge Viaduct to Tristis Rock](#)

[Guardian Walking Guide: Stalldown Barrow, Dartmoor, Devon](#)

