

Dartmoor 'Discovery' Road Race

Description of Route

From the start outside the 'Railway Inn' on the B3212 (Two Bridges Road), the first half-mile is flat and downhill, passing through the outskirts of Princetown and onto the open moor.

Two gentle ascents of approx. 20 metres at the half mile point faces the runners before descending 51 metres over the next mile to *Two Bridges*, one and a half miles from the start. This is a lovely spot where two ancient bridges span the *West Dart River*. At this point runners will pass, on the right, the beautiful 18th century *Two Bridges Hotel*, with its peaceful riverside grounds.

Immediately after passing the hotel, the route bears right and up a short hill of approx. 12 metres. Now contestants will find the road gently undulating for the next four miles, with wonderful views of the moors and tors on the right, before descending quickly to the beauty spot of *Dartmeet*. This is where the West Dart and East Dart rivers join to form the River Dart, which eventually flows to the English Channel at Dartmouth.

From *Dartmeet* the road now rises steeply through open moorland where the top is reached near the seven-mile point. If runners can afford to look back when climbing this long hill, they will be rewarded with some lovely views of where they have just been and beyond.

From approx. 7 miles to 7.4 miles the route is gently undulating again and fairly easy running. At 7.6 miles the road starts to descend steeply, reaching the village of *Poundsgate* at 8 miles. Runners are advised to exercise extreme caution when negotiating this steep downhill section, as the road is narrow with sharp twists and turns. During a short level section contestants will pass another ancient hostelry, the 13th century *Tavistock Inn* at *Poundsgate*.

At 9 miles, the road descends very steeply for a mile and again, extreme caution is required. Just before the 10-mile point the road levels out and the beauty spot of *New Bridge* is reached. *The route has now descended from 430 metres above sea level at Princetown, to just 98 metres at New Bridge.* There are toilets at **NEW BRIDGE**, adjacent to the car park on the right. ****The runners now cross over an old and very narrow stone bridge over the River Dart, where there will be marshals to halt traffic to allow them safe passage ****

The road now climbs steeply for ½ mile to the 10.2 mile mark, where it descends fairly steeply to 11 miles. Here it becomes undulating but mostly downhill to *Holne Bridge* at 11.2 miles. **** This is another very narrow bridge over the River Dart, and again there will be marshals in attendance to ensure the safe passage of the runners ****, a level stretch of running here, surrounded by woodland, then climbing again to approx. 11.5 miles and down once more, reaching the lowest point of the course at approx. 70 metres above sea level.

P.T.O.

At 12 miles into the race, the runners are just 1 mile from the centre of *Ashburton*, one of Devon's stannery towns, existing here since the 12th century. A fairly flat road from the 12-mile point but gently rising at 12.5 miles into the approaches of *Ashburton*, then descending slightly to the town centre at 13.1 miles. In the town centre the runners are directed sharp left for the road to *Widcombe-in-the-Moor*. Level running to 13.4 miles where there is another left turn and the road begins to rise. ****Care must be taken when running through Ashburton, as it is a very small town with narrow roads, with parked vehicles making it even narrower****

The longest continuous climb of the course begins at 13.5 miles, but it is a steady ascent, rather than steep. The climb levels out at 14.5 miles where there is a long descent to *Buckland-in-the-Moor*, with stunning views all around, reaching *Buckland* and the *craft centre* at 16 miles.

As well as lovely scenery, the runners should find this road very quiet and peaceful. Past the *craft centre*, the road is still descending slightly and very soon the runners will see, on the right a picture postcard cluster of beautiful thatched cottages, much reproduced on calendars and Christmas cards. They lie in a wooded hollow by a boulder-strewn stream surrounded by beech trees. Try not to miss them!!

Undulating to 16.5 miles and up and down to *Stone Cross* at 17.4 miles. Sharp right here, and climbing all the way to the 18-mile point. The course has now ascended to the 345 metres above sea level point and *Widcombe-in-the-Moor* can be seen nestling in the valley, as the runners turn left to start a long descent to the village. More stunning views here.

At 19.3 miles the road finally levels out and eventually passes the quaint *Rugglestone Inn*, near the 20 mile point, before climbing approx. 10 meters to *Widcombe-in-the-Moor*, immortalised by the Devon folk song 'Uncle Tom Cobley'. It takes only a few minutes to pass through this small village where the runners turn left. High tors can be seen looming beyond *Widcombe*, but not to worry, the route skirts them all!!

The road gradually ascends 85 metres or so to the 22-mile point, and we are now in very open moorland country. The road undulates for a few miles, with not much sign of habitation. Past *Langworthy Farm* at 23 miles, undulating slightly all the way to 24.2 miles, then past *Soussons Forest* on the right. The route now ascends 55 metres to the *Postbridge* road, where the runners turn left and head for *Postbridge* (about a mile distant), continue through *Postbridge*, passing the ancient clapper bridge on the left, and the road is fairly level.

At 29 miles there is a rise of approx. 27 metres before descending to *Two Bridges* and just over 1½ miles to go to *Princetown* and the **FINISH** along the **B3212**. For 1 mile it is mainly uphill, but the last ¼ mile is fairly level to the finish. In the final half mile, look over the walls on your right to catch sight of the famous *Dartmoor Prison*.