

Stage 4/4A



Stages 4 and 4A from **Belstone** follow the same route for the majority of the walk. After South Zeal, **Stage 4** carries on directly to Throwleigh, where **Stage 4A** detours via Cosdon Stone Rows.

Stage 4



Low route



Belstone - Throwleigh



6 miles / 10 km



3½ - 4½ hours

A wooded high level path along Belstone Cleave descends down to the riverside arriving at Sticklepath village. Lanes are taken to South Tawton and back to South Zeal before ascending Ramsley Hill. The quiet lane to Throwleigh is then followed, arriving at the church on the right.

Stage 4A



Low route with Moorland detour



Belstone - Throwleigh



7¾ miles / 12½ km



4-5 hours

Taking the Stage 4 route to Ramsley Hill, we leave via old walled green lanes up and along the side of Cosdon Hill to reach the triple stone rows and cists. Moorland tracks and paths then cross Blackaton Brook and Throwleigh Common to lead to Shilstone Tor where the lane is taken the short way to Throwleigh, arriving at the church on the left.



St Mary
the Virgin,
Belstone

EX20 1RB



St Mary,
Sticklepath

EX20 2NL



St Andrew,
South Tawton

EX20 2LW



St Mary,
South Zeal

EX20 2JY



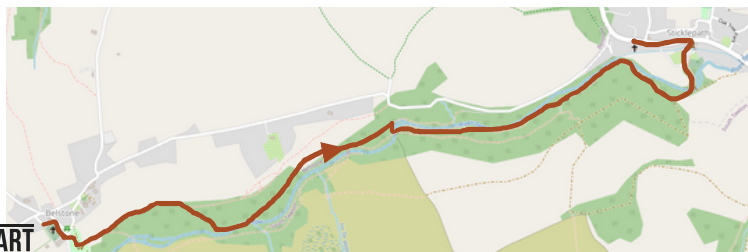
St Mary
the Virgin,
Throwleigh

EX20 2HT

Directions



Stage 4 / Stage 4A (Stage 4A follows the same route as Stage 4 until indicated otherwise)



From **Belstone Church**, turn right at The Tors Inn onto the Green looking out across the Taw valley. Keep slightly left and take the upper path past the bench high

up above the banks of the river, keeping the wall and fence on your left. Continue straight on following the path (an old leat) until you reach a small well on your left. Take the path that goes downhill to your right, to join another broad track.

Turn left here and then veer right through the trees, to cross the footbridge over the River. This bridge features quotations from *Tarka the Otter*, the book by Henry Williamson.

Follow the path, with the river close on your left and continue through woods along the bank.

Reflection

As you follow the river, you might like to think of how it flows, the waters constantly moving forward, over and around the rocks, giving life to the land around and the wildlife who drink from it as it journeys from the spring to the sea, joining with other waterways as it flows.

Have you ever thought about what your life's journey to this point might look like if it were mapped out as a river? If you have a notebook and pencil perhaps stop for a while and sketch it out. What fed you and helped you to grow when you were young, what twists and turns have you been through, have there been times when life felt like a period of drought and waters dried up, what have been the occasions in your life when the river was full and flowing majestically?

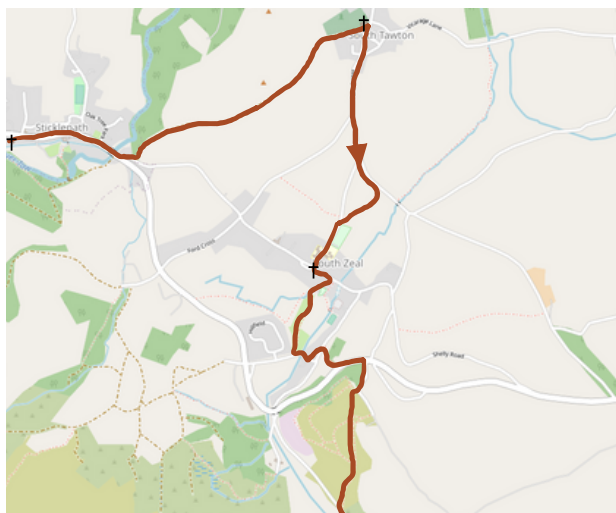
At the end of the path turn left through a gate to another footbridge. Cross this and follow the path to Finch Foundry.

The path enters a narrow-banked lane, with the Quaker Burying Ground on your right, before entering the gardens of the National Trust's Finch Foundry. Continue through and under the building, turning left along the main road through Sticklepath. **St Mary's Church** is 400 metres on your left. Rest and reflect a while on this site where worshippers have gathered for almost 1,000 years.

Directions



Stage 4 / Stage 4A (Stage 4A follows the same route as Stage 4 until indicated otherwise)



On leaving the church, retrace your steps along the main road past Finch Foundry. Cross the River Taw and take the left fork immediately after the bridge. Shortly turn left again along a track, part of the Tarka Trail, leading to South Tawton.

St Andrew's Church, with its impressive roof bosses, is on your left. During your visit to the church, perhaps reflect on countless others who have sat in these pews and looked up to the roof bosses, perhaps turning their attention to the heavens beyond.

From the church, head back down the main road to the south, forking left at Moon's Cross. Go downhill past a turning to the right and, before you get to the river crossing, take the signposted footpath to the right across fields, turning left when it reaches the lane. Follow the lane to the centre of South Zeal and the little church of **St Mary**. Both the chapel and garden are places of peace and sanctuary.

From St Mary's, go downhill past the Village Shop and Café and The Oxenham Arms, before turning right onto a footpath between the houses set back from the road. The path leads across grass to another tarmac lane, where you turn left. Follow the lane round to the left then just before the sign, turn right up the signposted footpath that winds its way up the hill between the houses. Ignore the path to the left where a garden opens up and continue to a gate where you turn sharp left and climb steeply up to the main road. Count the steps!

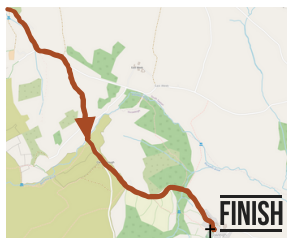
Turn left and stay on the pavement before carefully crossing the road at the bend and taking the lane uphill to the right of the houses at Ramsley. Take the track in the trees off to the right that will bring you out to the common land. After the trees, bear left up the hill for splendid views across the valley to Cosdon Hill and over South Zeal. Continue on the grassy tracks to the south steadily going downhill, steep in places, until the road is reached, where you turn left.

(The route splits here into **Stage 4 (Low route)** which follows the road to Throwleigh, while **Stage 4A (Moorland route)** takes a 1¼ mile detour via Cosdon Stone Rows before arriving in Throwleigh).

Belstone to Throwleigh



Stage 4 (Low route)



For the direct route to Throwleigh, continue along the road for just over 0.5 miles, then keep right at the fork, heading for Clannaborough. At the next fork, after a cattle grid and just before Clannaborough Farm, keep left. Follow this lane downhill and at a left bend you will see a gate with Dartmoor Way signs.

You can use this track across fields with several stiles and a boardwalk that will bring you into the church from the north side. If you prefer keeping to the lane continue past before climbing up to Throwleigh.

You will arrive at the Church Lych Gate on your right, one of the few thatched ones surviving.

Stage 4A (Moorland route)



For the detour to Cosdon Stone Rows, take the next signposted track on the right (to Nine Stones). There follows a series of walled tracks and lanes that meander left and right but always uphill to

take you onto the Moor and the eastern flank of Cosdon Hill.

Keeping the last stone wall on your right you will reach its corner with the Moor and Cosdon Hill beyond. Keep on the path leading away from the corner and this will lead you up to the triple stone rows and other chambers and stones that feature here.

On the left-hand side of the stone rows, as you will have entered them, you will see a clear grass track leading away, heading south east, above Cheriton Combe. Take this and when it curves to the left follow the lesser track to the right that leads down to Blackaton Brook where you will cross at the head of its small gorge. Keep to the track on the other side, straight up heading south east across Throwleigh Common, ignoring the tracks to the left. You will eventually see Shilstone Tor ahead where you can take a break before crossing the lane below.

Cross the lane and take the lane that leads down through the gateway towards Higher Shilston, passing this ancient farmstead on your right. Keep on the lane past houses on the left until it descends into Throwleigh. Opposite a track leading off to the right, take the steps in the bank that lead you into the churchyard.

Here, at St Mary the Virgin, you will again find roof bosses depicting the Three Hares and the Green Man.

