

Reflection and Prayer

This stage of our pilgrimage route set out from Lydford and follows old Saxon roads and ancient green lanes until we reach St. Thomas à Becket church at Sourton with its grassy labyrinth.

Pilgrimage is often used as a way to describe our journey through life. This section of The Archangel's Way offers opportunities to reflect more deeply on this concept.

Lydford itself is the final destination of the Lych Way or Way of the Dead, the path along which the dead from remote moorland homes were carried for burial at Lydford.

Devon band Show of Hands have written a beautiful haunting song, The Old Lych Way. If you are able to, spend a moment in the churchyard of St Petroc's church and listen to it. (It can be easily found on YouTube, simply search for The Old Lych Way)

We live in a society where we so often try to deny the reality of our own mortality. Time flies by so fast, we get caught up with worries and forget to live each moment in its fullness. This route takes you right out onto the high moorland. Relish the feeling of being so far removed from the business of life.

As you reach St Thomas à Becket church, through a gate in the field behind you'll find a small labyrinth. Take off your shoes, feel the earth beneath your feet and walk slowly and mindfully along the single path to the centre. Think perhaps of the things that are holding you back from living your life in its fullness. As you reach the centre and turn to return back out to the journey ahead, maybe offer up what holds you back and commit to walking a closer path to the one you were made for.



May we discover that the road we didn't choose

Didn't want to travel,

Is a highway that leads unerringly

Towards the light.

Frances Copsey, A Book of Blessings (2014)

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The Archangel's Way

wander and wonder

STAGE 2A

St Petroc's Church, Lydford
to Church of St Thomas à Becket, Sourton
(moorland route)



'Look and ask for the ancient paths,
where the good way lies; and walk in it,
and find rest for your souls'

(Jeremiah 6:16)

STAGE 2A

Lydford to Sourton



There is a choice of routes between Lydford and Sourton.

Stage 2 (low route) takes the easier, low level route, while this card describes the higher level, more challenging moorland route.

If the weather is bad and the cloud cover such that the tors are not visible then inexperienced walkers should consider staying on the low-level route described in Stage 2.

From St. Petroc's Church, cross the Castle grounds into the lane behind the Castle Inn. The lane joins other Saxon village streets and takes you past The Ancient Spring. At the T junction turn right and continue past the old Chapel, crossing the main road into Silver Street. This lane is the last leg of The Lych Way, the "way of the dead" that starts in Bellever, near Postbridge and traverses 12 miles of Moor to Lydford.

Continue straight on at the crossroads and pass under the old railway bridge along a green lane that then turns sharp right, becoming Skitt Lane and leading to the main A386.

Cross straight over with great care following the lane uphill to a gate onto the Moor, alongside Highdown. This leads you out onto the Moor proper, with splendid views across to Brat Tor, Sharp Tor, Doe Tor and Hare Tor.

Continue across the top of the moorland but do not take the lower paths, heading straight out directly in line with Brat Tor and its cross on the top. Follow the faint path through the gorse that soon becomes a clear route that brings you to a path crossing where you go right following the curve, across another path before heading down a track towards the River Lyd. This brings you down to the old Wheal Mary Emma mine, at which point you continue alongside the river (on your right) tracing a narrow and rocky path that climbs up to Captain Hunter's Rock and Plaque, always a fine spot for a break and contemplation on the bench admiring the view up to Brat Tor.

Head along the river until the ford and bridge.

If the weather is good, consider crossing over and taking the loop up to Widgery Cross and back. There are several paths

to choose from but it is probably easiest to take the track between Arms Tor and Brat Tor. Once at the top it is a simple excursion south to the top of Brat Tor and Widgery Cross. Take in the views before heading straight back down to the bridge. (This will add 1.5 miles to the route).

If not climbing Brat Tor, do not cross the bridge or river but follow the narrow path to its left keeping the wall to your left and the river to your right. Keep going all the way including squeezing under some branches, over some tree roots and over rocks and boulders set in the river.

When the wall corner arrives, follow it to the left until you meet a stony track coming up to meet you. Turn right, ignoring the grassy track and continue along the stony track.

Stay on this track now high above the river, through the cutting and then turn right at the end, still on the track.

Carry on as the track rises to shortly cross over a timber bridge, admiring the views into the Moor and Great Links Tor, together with those in the opposite direction, west, across the Devon countryside.

Shortly before the stony path ends, you will see a grassy track to your left leading away

to Sourton Tor. Follow this and bear right downhill when another path comes in from the left.

Follow this track that keeps to the right of the base of Sourton Tor. This curves around to the north reaching a series of depressions that were the former Sourton Ice Works, dating from 1880's.

Go left and through the Ice Works to reach another track that leads down the side of the hill into the tunnel and cross the bridge over the Granite Way (the old railway line) to visit St Thomas à Becket church at Sourton.

You will find a small labyrinth in the church grounds. Walking a labyrinth is a form of pilgrimage in itself, and so you might like to do this before you enter the church.

