

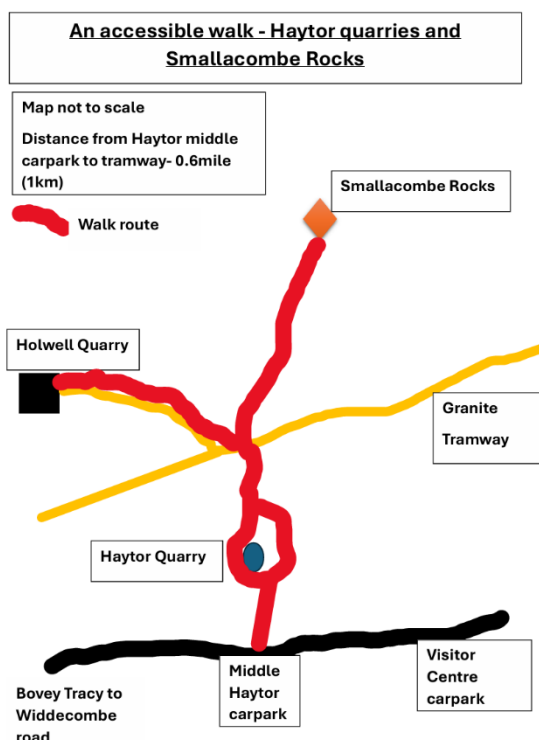
## An accessible walk: Haytor quarries and Smallacombe Rocks

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This is an out and back walk with two options for extensions. It is about 2.5 miles if you complete both the extensions, about 1.5 miles if you do neither. Most of the route has a rough gravel path, some is grassy. There are a couple of short steep climbs and a longer climb so is categorised as Level 3 or 'suitable for some'. It is suitable for those using electric wheelchairs and mobility scooters. It has been reccied by the Wheeled Access Group. It goes through two gates which have 'trombone' handles that may be difficult to use from an unaccompanied mobility scooter rider.

There are five quarries in the Haytor area which were worked intermittently between 1820 and 1919. This walk visits two of them. Between 1820 and 1858 the rock from these quarries was transported via the Haytor Granite Tramway to the Stover Canal. The tramway itself was built from granite from these same quarries, and due to its durable nature much of it remains visible today.

Haytor granite was used in the reconstruction of London Bridge which opened in 1831. In 1970 the original bridge was moved to Arizona (for a price)! The last rock quarried here in 1919 was used for the Exeter war memorial. The granite in Haytor Rocks has large feldspar crystals and is less suitable for building work than the granite from lower on Haytor Down so fortunately the top was never quarried.



You will start at the middle Haytor carpark car park, crossing the road to follow the gravel track to Haytor quarry. In winter months this carpark is closed. Park at the Visitor Centre carpark and go up to the middle carpark to access the track to Haytor quarry, The track from the Visitor Centre car park to Haytor quarry is rough and there are small gullies to be crossed.

Once you reach the quarry, go through the gate. The path around the quarry has been considerably improved by the Sunday Haytor volunteers in recent years.



*Figure 1 Haytor quarry*

This is the largest of the five Haytor quarries, covering about 0.5ha. It has sheer walls and is now flooded providing a very peaceful place in what was once a very noisy and dangerous working environment. As you go in you will see the remains of a crane partially submerged in the water once used to lift granite out of the quarry. The iron winch and wooden boom can be clearly seen. Walk around the quarry and look for the metal stanchions, pegs with an iron loop, that were used to secure the crane. Look in the water and depending on the time of year you can see tadpoles, fish and many small water invertebrates.

Follow the path and exit the quarry via a steep but short hill and through another gate. After the gate enjoy the banks of the cutting, with typical Dartmoor plants such as bilberries, ferns and heather.

Once you are through the cutting the path opens out giving an amazing view across the Becka Brook Valley to Greater and Houndtor. Follow this path until you meet the tramway. The quarries and the tramway were developed by the Templar family. The tramway was used to take quarried granite to the Stover canal, from where it went by boat to Teignmouth and then to Exeter and London. The tramway was opened in 1820, and is about 8 miles long. When you join the tramway you will see a set of points where one branch of the tramway goes to Emsworthy and Gutter quarries and the northerly tramway goes downhill to Holwell quarry.

There are two extensions to the walk. One follows the tramway slightly to your left to Holwell quarry, the other crossed the track and takes the track slightly to your right to Smallacombe Rocks. Both extensions are rougher than the previous track so you may wish to turn around at this point and follow the directions from \*.

Holwell quarry track: This track follows a tramway down to Holwell quarry. It can be rough in places and is quite steep on the return using up some battery power. Once you get to the quarry go inside and enjoy the towering slabs of rock that make up the walls of the quarry. There are also great views across the valley and down to Manaton.

On your return to the points at the tramway you can go back to the carpark or turn slightly left and follow the grassy track to Smallacombe Rocks.



*Figure 2 Points on granite tramway*

Smallacombe Rocks track. This follows a grassy track which has some stones. About half way along is a gully which is currently being worked on by the DNPA to make it more accessible for scooters, prams and those with limited mobility to cross. When you reach the Rocks enjoy the amazing views and also hunt for the Bronze Age hut circles. There are four hut circles and the remains of four reaves or walls surrounding ancient fields that can be seen at Smallacombe Rocks.

Return the way you came to the points on the tramway.

\*Whatever length of walk you went on you will need to return from the points at the tramway junction and then head back towards Haytor quarry. Shortly before you get to the cutting turn left and go slightly downhill going around the spoil heap from the quarry.

Looking eastward you can see ditches left from the tin workings in the 12<sup>th</sup> to 15<sup>th</sup> centuries. The tramway crosses these workings, an excellent example of the many histories of the area. A 19<sup>th</sup> century tramway crossing a 14<sup>th</sup> century tin working now used in the 20<sup>th</sup> and 21<sup>st</sup> centuries for leisure.



*Figure 3 View looking eastwards*

Haytor Down has a wonderful mix of gorse, heather, bilberries and grasses. It is grazed by sheep, cattle and ponies creating a mosaic of habitats.

Keep the spoil heap to your right, go slightly up hill and you will meet the track that returns to the car park.

If you would like any further information about the Wheeled Access Group, please visit [www.dartmoorwags.org.uk](http://www.dartmoorwags.org.uk)

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