


# Key

 Four Villages Walk

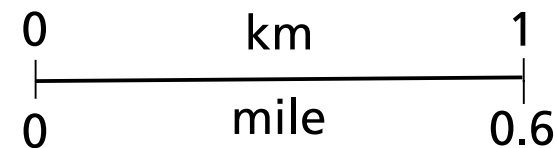
 Points of Interest

 Parking

 Toilets

 Museum

 National Trust Visitor Centre



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Self guided walk exploring South Zeal, South Tawton, Belstone and Sticklepath. The suggested walking route will help you experience some of the delights of South Zeal, South Tawton, Belstone and Sticklepath. Please be aware of your own limitations and navigational ability before embarking on any of the routes described.

### ROUTE INFORMATION

**Parking** - Car parks in South Zeal, South Tawton, Belstone and Sticklepath

**Facilities** - South Zeal public toilets

**Distance** - 10 km / 6.5 miles

**Time** - 3.5 - 4 hours approx.

**Terrain** - Largely easy going along roads and defined tracks. At times along Belstone Cleave you will need to pick your way over stones. In wet weather, some of the paths can be muddy.

This circular walk takes you through South Tawton, South Zeal, Sticklepath and Belstone. It gives you stunning views of South Tawton and Belstone Commons and takes you into the river valley of Belstone Cleave. Why not make a day of the walk and spend time visiting local pubs as you go? The route directions start at South Zeal but you can start the walk in any of the locations; for South Tawton start at number 2, for Sticklepath start at 3, for Belstone start at 5.

#### 1 Medieval Villages

Leave the car park the way that you drove in and turn left to head down the road. At the T junction turn left, walking up hill into the village towards to church and phone box.

South Zeal owes its origins to the granting of rights for a market and two fairs to the lord of South Tawton in 1299.

It is a planned settlement established as a series of long, thin 'burgage plots' on either side of the main street, a plan which is almost completely preserved today.

Turn right onto the road opposite the phone box and continue along the quiet road. You will reach a gateway on your right with a fingerpost signing you onto the footpath. Take the footpath through the field, keeping the hedge on your left. You will come to a gate in the top left hand corner.

At the gate turn right down the road until you are almost at the bridge. Just before the bridge, go through the gate on your left and follow the track, keeping the hedge and river to your right. Continue along the track, passing through a second gate. Walk through the next field to the gate in the bottom right corner and onto a well-defined track to the road. At the road turn left up the hill. As you walk up the hill, take the second turning on your right where St. Andrew's Church in South Tawton will come into view.

#### 2 Medieval Community Hubs

Head towards the church stopping to look at the church and church house.

The church house in South Tawton is one of the finest on Dartmoor and dates to the 14th century.

Such buildings were constructed by the parish for the brewing and sale of ale as a means of raising money for the local church.

Continue straight on across the road, keeping the Old Church House to your right and onto the track in front of you, signposted the Tarka Trail. South Tawton is listed in the Domesday Book of 1086 at which time it contained 56 villagers and was held by King William for whom it was worth 49 pounds and 10 shillings. The track, at this point, is likely of medieval origin.

#### 3 Waterways

At the road, turn right and follow the road along to your right. Go over the bridge and into the village of Sticklepath until you reach the Finch Foundry This has its origins in the late 18th century and has been a corn and textile mill but during the 19th century was a tool factory, and saw mill. It drew water via a leat from the River Taw to power its operations, via multiple water wheels. It became a working museum in the 1960s.

At the Finch Foundry, head through the entrance archway and follow the road towards the car park until you reach a little passageway on your left at the entrance to the car park. Take the passageway and follow the path towards the river. At the river turn right, making your way up the river and over a footbridge.

After the footbridge, turn right again and follow the track straight up towards the gate, Go through the gate and bear right, keeping the river on your right and enjoying the riverside walk as you go, picking your way over rocks at times.

En route you will pass a weir. Weirs were structures built across rivers in order to create a deep pool from which water could be drawn. In this case, the weir feeds the leat which takes water to power the machinery at Finch Foundry.

#### 4 Animals of Belstone Cleave

You will reach a second footbridge. Walk over the footbridge, reading the 'Tarka the Otter' inscriptions as you cross. After crossing the bridge, bear right slightly up onto a stone track. Follow this track briefly until you reach the next footbridge on your left. Cross the footbridge and turn right and follow the river. Cross the river using the footbridge and follow the stone track round to your left and up the hill. Stop to look back at the views of Belstone Common and South Tawton Common.

As you walk along Belstone Cleave, look out for both the Small Pearl Bordered Fritillary, Pearl Bordered Fritillary and the Brown Hairstreak Butterflies during the Summer. There are also dormice in the woods and you may see Grass Snakes or Slow Worms.

In the early Summer, listen out for cuckoos, if you're lucky you might spot one. Look out for signs of otters along the river, you might see footprints or spraint on rocks.

#### 5 Belstone Village







At the top of the hill you will have arrived in Belstone. Follow the road towards the church and old phone box. Belstone is an ancient settlement appearing, like South Tawton, in the Domesday Book in 1086. However, it was much smaller than the latter, containing 8 villagers and being worth 1 pound and 10 shillings to its lord, Baldwin the Sheriff.

#### 6 Historic Farmsteads


When you reach a sharp right hand bend, turn off the road onto the track and take the bridleway on the right hand side. Follow the track and after a little while it will meet another track. Follow the track to your right, passing through a gate and continuing, down the hill and through a wooded area until you reach the road.

Continue straight on at the road, walking downhill back into Sticklepath. Walking through Sticklepath, back the way you came, you will reach the bridge. At the bridge turn left and follow the road up the hill. Continue along the road back into South Zeal and back to the car park.

## RANGER CODE

	Close gates behind you		Use a campsite or check the website
	Keep your dog on a lead		Bag up litter and take it home
	Share the roads and bridleways		Don't feed the ponies

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