

Alternative start point is Jamaica Inn. This adds about 1 mile to the walk.

Route – Dairywell Hill, Tolborough Downs and Tor, Brown Willy, Codda Downs and Codda

Interest – Cairns, standing stones, Cornwall’s highest hill with superb panoramic views

Useful Information

Parking: Roadside parking N side of the A30, within yards of the start point.

Intermediate Parking: None.

Getting There: From A30, 10 miles E of Bodmin, take the Bolventor (Jamaica Inn) turning. Before going under A30, go L and L towards Bolventor Church. Start point at a stile on the R, the lay-by is shortly before that.

Transport: None known.

Refreshments: Jamaica Inn (food all day).

Toilets: Only at Jamaica Inn.

Route Directions

Bolventor to Tolborough Tor - 0.81 miles

Start at the stile, at 18233/76864, on the lane to Bolventor Church, opposite Jamaica Inn across the A30.

Go over a wooden stile (*FP sign*) and cross a field past a hybrid stile to a gap on R to a second field. Follow the LH hedge downhill, through a gap to a third field, and continue to the bottom to a metal stile and down to a track. Continue forward on the track to Dairywell Hill (*three aggressive German Shepherds, probably safely fenced*), bearing R uphill, with the house and a converted barn on your L, to a galvanised gate. Continue up fairly steeply between high hedges, overall NNW, on a rough track (*can be muddy in winter*). The track eases off after 100 yards or so, and continues up to a galvanised gate. *Here a track goes off R to the lane to Codda.* Continue up to a galvanised gate on to Tolborough Downs. Here the track continues but you should ignore it and head directly up, just W of N, fairly steeply over rough ground, to the cairn on top of Tolborough Tor at 17543/77882 at 1160 feet. **(0.81 miles)**

Tolborough Tor to Brown Willy Summit - 2.35 miles

Brown Willy, your next objective, is NW but do not head directly for it as marshy land intervenes. Instead, to your W you will see a boundary stone, ¼ mile away. Head downhill to this at 17356/77895 and cross the low boundary bank in which it is set. Now go R, continuing downhill following the low bank, roughly NNW towards the centre of the Brown Willy ridge, down to 1050 feet, eventually following a wire fence on your R. *Along here it can sometimes be very wet in places.* At the end of the wire fence you come to a rusty iron gate. **(1.21 miles)** *In winter it can be very muddy here. Here you could be tempted to go through a gate on your L to Catshole Downs and follow a much more direct line to the southern end of the Brown Willy ridge. This is not recommended as it can be very difficult and marshy.*

Go through the gate and continue uphill gently on a wide grassy track, beginning N then NNW, a wire fence to Catshole Downs to your L, a hedge bank to Codda Downs to your R. *This track can get very wet and muddy in places. When it does, walk on Codda Downs to your R but please don't walk on top of the hedge bank.* Along here you climb to 1140 feet and descend to 1085 feet at 1.43 miles. At 16947/78820 at 1.63 miles, where there used to be a moveable pallet in a ragged wire fence, you now go through a wooden gate through a barbed wire fence. *Note this point as it is where you will head onto Codda Downs on the way back.* Continue up to 1090 feet then down to 1010 feet. Just after a wire fence heads off L over Catshole Downs, you come to a wooden stile on L (beware barbed wire) at 16604/79806. **(2.32 miles)**

A clear walked swathe winds towards the summit of Brown Willy. This can sometimes be extremely wet and marshy. Follow it gently uphill. After about 250 yards you cross an ancient furze covered double bank and ditch, sometimes very muddy. *Were you to go R here you would come to Fowey Well in about 200 yards, not the source of the Fowey and not always in water. Nonetheless, cattle always gather around it.* Continue forward, the slope gradually becomes moderate, crossing another boundary bank, to the foot of the eastern slope of Brown Willy at 1180 feet. **(2.66 miles)** Here the climb proper begins on a clearly walked but sometimes indistinct and rocky path. You will reach the ridge of Brown Willy at a clear N-S path at 1365 feet. **(2.74 miles)**

Brown Willy summit is to your R but you really should first head L to the massive cairn at the S end of the ridge. The path is fairly clear and passes a couple of old outdated 'permissive path' WM posts. You reach the southern cairn at 15925/79697 at 1340 feet. **(2.89 miles)** Note Fernacre Farm below to your W, home of Brown Willy Farms whose owners do not really seem to like walkers on their land. *You could be tempted to descend from here almost due W back to the stile but it is tough going and not recommended.* Return N on the path, down then up to the northern cairn at the summit at 15872/80002 at 1378 feet. **(3.16 miles)**

Views from Brown Willy Summit

Views from the summit cairn of Brown Willy are panoramic and incorporate much of Cornwall. Along the north coast you can see Stepper Point by Padstow and Steeple Point beyond Bude. On the south coast you can see Rame Head just west of Plymouth and Black Head on St. Austell Bay. To the east you can see Dartmoor and to the west you see Clay Country. Intriguingly, bearing in mind the massive cairns on Showery Tor and Brown Willy itself, you can also see the series of cairns on Brown Gally, the two great cairns on Carburrow Tor and the cairn on Tolborough Tor. I am sure there must be others.

Brown Willy to Codda – 2.01 miles

Retrace your steps, taking care on the steep descent, to the stile by which you entered Brown Willy territory. *Do not be tempted to begin crossing Codda Downs yet; you would encounter marsh and a wire fence.* Go R on the grassy track, down and up and back through the wooden gate. **(4.33 miles)** Here a wire fence goes L across Codda Downs. Cross the ditch and hedge bank onto Codda Downs and bear L, heading roughly ESE uphill, *could be wet in winter*, towards a large rock apparently balanced on the horizon. After about 250 yards, to your L is what could possibly be a curving alignment of recumbent stones. A little further on, at 17176/78695, is a massive 15 foot long rock, possibly a fallen menhir, which appears to have been worked at one end. At the top, at 1145 feet at, you reach the rock you were aiming for, which turns out to be almost a logan stone. **(4.61 miles)**

From here you can see Blackhill, just up the other side of the valley roughly to your ESE. Codda is just out of sight at the bottom below it. Head for Blackhill, passing occasional standing stones, possibly boundary stones, and when you come to hedge banks stay just to the L of them avoiding private land. Codda comes into view, partly hidden by trees. Continue down to a track, just to the R of Codda, **(5.17 miles)** On the way down you may spot a couple of sheep gates in the hedge banks; level with one is a possible cairn at 17896/78439.

Codda to Bolventor – 1.10 miles

Go R on the well-made track, crossing a shallow ford, often dry, and continue up, passing on your L a track (*bridleway WM*) to Leskernick Hill and Hendra Downs, subject of a walk from Bowithick, then passing an entrance to Blackhill, up to a metal gate. Go forward on the lane towards Bolventor, with Tolborough Tor above R, passing North Tolborough. Bolventor is now in view on the ridge ahead. At 5.66 miles, you pass a track on the R leading to the track you used earlier from Dairywell Hill to Tolborough Tor. The lane continues downhill, passing on your R a track to Dairywell, then crossing a bridge over a stream. Continue uphill, passing on your R a track to Dairywell Hill. About 100 yards before you reach the A30 signs, go R on a lane uphill, heading towards Bolventor church, bearing R back to your start point **(6.27 miles)**

For the walk from Bowithick, very strongly recommended, go to the top of my Bodmin Moor Walks page and click on 'Five Hills Walk from Bowithick'