

Walks from the Railway

HIGH WILLHAYS & YES TOR

Visit the highest point on Dartmoor, and indeed in Southern England.

Caution: Walk enters a military training area - see advice (right).

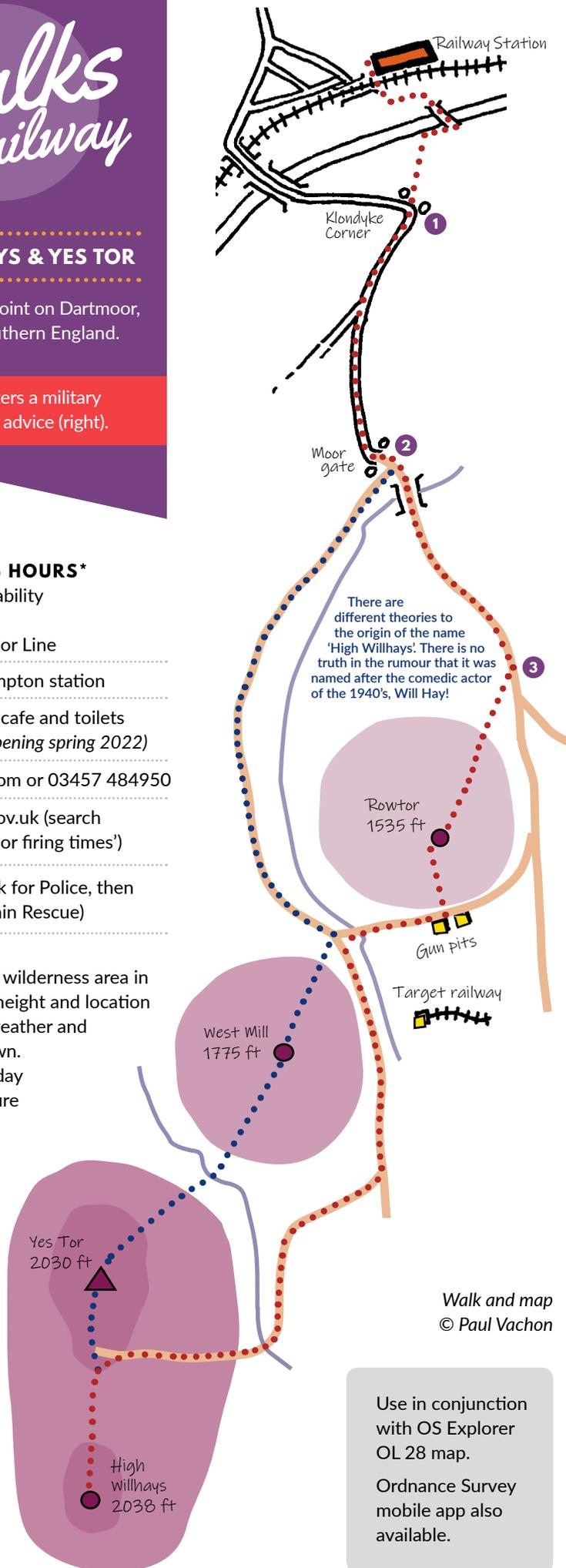
8.5 MILES | 4.5-6 HOURS*

*very dependent on ability

Line	Dartmoor Line
Start/End	Okehampton station
Facilities	Station cafe and toilets (both opening spring 2022)
Train times	GWR.com or 03457 484950
Firing times	www.gov.uk (search 'dartmoor firing times')
Emergencies	999 (ask for Police, then Mountain Rescue)

Dartmoor is a unique wilderness area in Southern Britain. Its height and location assure a mixture of weather and microclimate of its own. All four seasons in a day can be a regular feature of this landscape. Its easy access and soft landscape belies, and sometimes hides, its actual mountainous nature.

High Willhays and Yes Tor being over 2000 feet above sea level, qualify as mountains. This should be taken seriously when walking anywhere on the moor.



Walk and map
© Paul Vachon

Use in conjunction with OS Explorer OL 28 map.

Ordnance Survey mobile app also available.



The comparatively gentle features become hazardous in poor weather. Dartmoor is notorious for rapid changes of weather. And visitors should come well prepared - waterproof clothing and stout walking boots, map, and compass - if you know how to use one. And of course a mobile phone.

The local Mountain Rescue team is called out on average 25 times a year to rescue missing and injured persons from, and around, this part of the moor.

To add to the hazards, the army use a lot of the moor for training. Much of this area has live firing exercises - and even when not firing live ammunition, exercises using blank firing may occur.

The military will signify when live firing is due by flying red flags at strategic locations. Avoid the moor when the red flags are flying. During the summer holidays and weekends, live firing is suspended, and this is the best time to visit this part of the moor. To check firing times, visit www.gov.uk and search 'dartmoor firing times'.

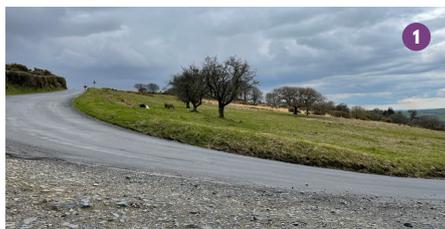


At the station, cross over the line via the footbridge. Go through the gate and head right towards the road.

Turn left up the road for about 50 metres until you see a gate and fingerpost marked 'Permitted Path to Dartmoor'. Go through the gate and follow the right hand path to another fingerpost where you turn right and up a steep narrow path until you reach a footbridge. This takes you over the A30.

At the end of the footbridge turn right and follow the path alongside the fence for about 100 metres.

The path then turns upwards across the field towards a gate. Through the gate you will meet the road at Klondyke corner (1). Follow the road uphill and continue for just over half a mile to the Moorgate (2).



Cross over the river bridge and continue up the metalled road for about half a mile. Here you will come to a long, thin area used for car parking and where the road forks.

Looking to the right you will see Rowtor and a well trodden path (3) which will take you to its summit.



Carry straight on over the summit to the far side. Here you will see West Mill rising up with the even higher Yes Tor behind it.

Look for two mounds side by side, down the hill beneath you. These previously housed anti-tank firing bays. Head down to these mounds and turn right following the track across a stream to a 'T' junction.

If you are inquisitive, and into military history, look out along the firing line from the old anti-tank bays. A few hundred metres away you will see a grassy structure. This is a shed which housed the locomotive that hauled a target along rails for the guns to shoot at. It's worth



a visit – the rails are still there, as is a six inch thick steel target plate. Be wary of any strange objects in the ground. Don't pick anything up for obvious reasons!

Back to the 'T' junction, turn left and follow the track which skirts around West Mill. After a few minutes you will come to a fork in the track. Turn right along a fairly level track which runs parallel to Yes Tor and seemingly away from the summit.

After a few minutes you will reach a brook. Follow the track across the brook – trying to keep your feet dry! The track bends to the right and then climbs steadily upwards. To your left you will notice several insignificant rocky outcrops along the ridgeline above you. This is High Willhays.

Towards the top the track divides left and right. Take the left route towards a series of rock outcrops – the last in the row, with the pile of stones on it, is High Willhays. For the highest point on Dartmoor, and indeed the highest point in Southern England, High Willhays is something of a disappointment! However there are some good views of the moor, and beyond.

By far the most spectacular of the Tors is Yes Tor – retrace your steps and head for its summit. From here, standing at the trig point, is a spectacular panoramic view of North Devon and Cornwall.

Return back to the railway station by retracing your route down. Alternatively, providing the weather is kind, take a direct route off Yes Tor towards West Mill.

Looking across to West Mill it is possible to discern a trodden path coming down from its summit towards Yes Tor. This points to a crossing point on a brook between the two Tors.

There is no definitive path off Yes Tor, as that side is heavily strewn with rocks which can be tricky to navigate through. Make your way as best, and as carefully, as you can towards the brook crossing point – which is marked by large boulders in the brook itself.

You will know you are in the right place as the crossing is into a very boggy section. There's no easy way across this bog. So just take care and resign yourself to wet boots, then head straight up towards the summit of West Mill.

Go straight over the summit where you will see down below you the 'T' junction you joined from the track from the old anti-tank emplacements. Head down towards the junction. On reaching it turn left onto the track, which becomes metalled, and continue down this road until you reach the Moorgate. Now backtrack your route down to the station.



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Face coverings advised on public transport unless you are exempt. If you can, please buy your ticket in advance on the GWR app or website.