

Bob, where's yer troosers?

Raising Funds for Prostate Cancer UK - Dartmoor Virtual Kilt Walk 2021

In 2020 I was invited to join a couple I know from the offshore industry in the Glasgow kiltwalk. The kiltwalk is a Scottish event enabling people to take part in walks in Glasgow, Aberdeen, Dundee and Edinburgh, however Covid prevented it and an innovative rebranded Virtual Kiltwalk was rescheduled for the weekend of 11-13 September. The kiltwalk is sponsored by the Hunter Foundation, set up by Sir Tom Hunter and it generously donates 50p for each pound raised up to £5000 per participant.



Photo: at the start 2020

Following its success in 2020, a virtual kiltwalk was set up for the weekend of 23-25 April. In February, I signed up for it and chose Prostate cancer UK as my chosen charity. Many families in the country are affected by prostate cancer. During my unashamedly brassy canvassing for funds in 2020, and again this year, I found out that 7 former shipmates were living with prostate cancer and sadly one had died from it.

My experience of the kiltwalk in 2020 is that a kilt is perfect for walking in, in my opinion far more comfortable than trousers. I had fears that it would be windy or that I would attract the attention of over curious dogs. In 2021, I was confident that dogs would ignore me! The wind was no problem either. I brought an acrylic kilt online for £35, so if it was damaged it would not be too demoralising compared with damaging a custom made wool kilt. I chose a weathered Gordon Tartan which is in neutral colours. Prostate cancer UK provided me with a T shirt with their Man of Men logo upon the front.

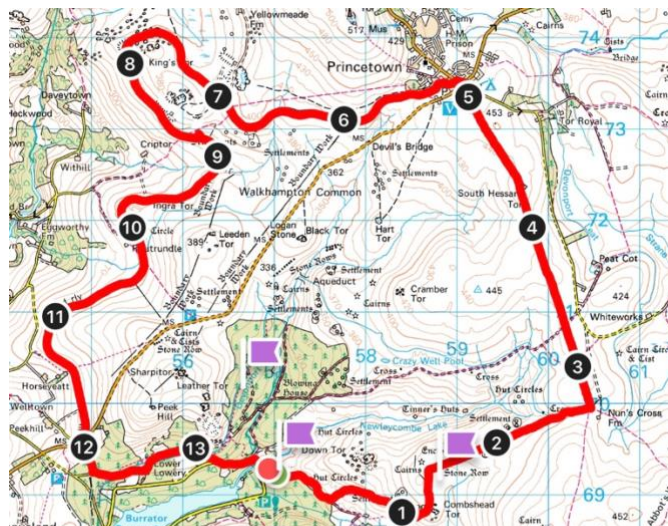


Photo: 2020 Walk 13¹/₄ miles

In 2020 we did a 12 mile route based on Norsworthy Bridge and returned via the former railway line from Princetown. This year, I chose a 12-16 mile route on Dartmoor, which gave me options to accommodate the weather conditions, ground conditions and the objections of old bones to such un natural exertions.

Another important point, was to arrange a lunch stop at the excellent Fox Tor café in Princetown. My oldest son Matt, and two neighbours accompanied me, to make sure I did

walked and did not loaf in a café or public house for the day. Both neighbours are ex Army, a former Royal Engineers Commando and a former infantry soldier. Last year a former RAF neighbour joined us, so I could lag behind with him! He was unable to join us this year, so with 2 ex squaddies as minders, I had to make a good go of it for the pride of the Royal Navy in general, the Survey branch in particular.



Photo: Burrator Reservoir from Cuckoo Rock New Years Eve 2020

After a couple of weeks of pontification, I decided to start training for the walk, as the lockdown and winter had been as good an excuse as any to stay at home. All the time I was encouraged by the generous donations that flowed in from family, friends, past and present work colleagues. I started with shorter walks of up to 10 miles, concentrating on what was to be the final half of the walk, where I was unfamiliar with the route.



We decided to do the walk a week earlier as we all had commitments on the actual weekend. It was a good choice as mid April was glorious. The ground was dry, it was cool but sunny with light wind so all in all it was good for walking. We set off from Norsworthy Bridge to make our lunch destination at Princetown. The walk took us up onto Drake's Leat then to the old

railway track bed. We made a shortcut up the hill to avoid a 2 mile walk around King's Tor. Edwardian railway passengers would disembark at mile (on the map), walk up the hill and rejoin the train (just before mile 7). After a pleasant al fresco lunch we picked up the footpath from Princetown going south past South Hessary Tor towards Nun's Cross. The afternoon was not so time dependent and we chose to walk over Higher Hartor Tor passed the impressive ancient standing stones.





Photo: Standing stones on Ditsworthy Warren

From Higher Hartor Tor we had a good view of Ditsworthy Warren, its standing stones and the River Plym as it makes its way to Cadover then down to Plymouth.



Photo Dave, Shaun, Bob and Matt

The final leg took us past Ditsworthy Warren House, which was the base for RN training exercises on Dartmoor. It brought back memories of being very wet and cold, but spurred on by encouraging words from Royal Marine trainers!

In the end we completed a walk of 16 miles. The weather was very kind and we yarned all the way around.

On a serious note, thanks to the generosity of donors, Prostate Cancer UK gained £3625, made up of £2130 of personal and company donations, £1065 from the Hunter Foundation and £430 in Gift Aid. I am at the age where I am at risk of prostate cancer. I believe in regular check ups with a PSA check to test the blood for Prostate Specific Antibodies accompanied by

a physical check. In the last few month I have had numerous Covid PCR tests, which are far more uncomfortable than a prostate check!

Prostate Cancer UK provides support to those living with the disease and their families. The charity is also at the forefront of ground breaking research to provide more reliable screening checks and new treatment for men living with it at all stages of the disease.

The website is <https://prostatecanceruk.org>

