

FROM 'JOBBOY' TO 'JOB'



Fi Darby is Blonde Two of the successful outdoors blog Two Blondes Walking. She is an Ordnance Survey GetOutside Champion and as well as running Two Blondes and her own freelance blog

writing business Fi Darby Freelance, does voluntary work with young people on Dartmoor and around the UK. Until very recently a secondary school teacher, Fi is now enjoying working from home and having more time to spend outside.

From 'Jobby' to 'Job'

Life can turn on a dime. At least it can if you are American; over here on Dartmoor, life is more likely to turn on a tor or even in a splodge of sheep poo (ankles on the other hand turn in rabbit holes). Two big changes have recently happened in my life and I put them both down to my love of Dartmoor and all things outside.

The Jobby

Firstly I feel that I must explain the title of this article. I am perhaps better known in Dartmoor circles as Blonde Two from Two Blondes Walking. Together with my walking partner Lucy Atkins, I have been writing daily blog posts for

Two Blondes for over four years now. All about the outdoors, our love for it and our work with young people. The blog and all the people we met through it didn't take long to become a huge part of my life. Such a huge part in fact that it was taking up as much time as a job (I already had one full-time teaching job) and paying as little money as a hobby – hence the 'jobby'!

The blog has been great and has got me out onto Dartmoor so many times over the last few years I have lost count. In order to write about the outdoors, you need to get out into it and Dartmoor is the perfect place to do just that.

So time rolled on, I wrote three children's books about Dartmoor and whilst my enjoyment of the pressures of teaching faded, my love for the outdoors and writing grew. Lucy and I were chosen to be part of the first cohort of Ordnance Survey GetOutside Champions, we were thrilled to be representing Devon and Dartmoor and our blogging lives really took off.

Wild Swimming

A more recent addition to my (already long) list of things to enjoy on Dartmoor is outdoor swimming. This started last summer after we were asked to review a copy of Sophie Pierce and Matt Newbury's book, 'Wild Swimming Walks, Dartmoor and South Devon'. Two trips up to Sharrah Pool on the Dart with my family and I was hooked. I am lucky enough to live in Torbay so I can visit the sea on one side and the pools and rivers of Dartmoor on the other. January sunrise in the sea is a sight to behold; a November dip in the Dart is a revitalising experience.

When my teaching career came to an unexpected halt I found myself in need of a way to earn money. That's when I started freelance writing and found that clients liked my work. Perhaps even better was my newfound freedom. If I get up and work at 6 in the morning, I can be on Dartmoor by lunchtime with a day's pay on its way to my bank account. After all these years I am working from home and the 'jobby' has finally become a job. ■

Stories should all have a moral shouldn't they. This one has two:

1. Stick at the things you love, for me this was the outdoors and Dartmoor.
2. Spend as much time outside as you possibly can. The inspiration for life is out there for the finding.



EAST DART WATERFALL

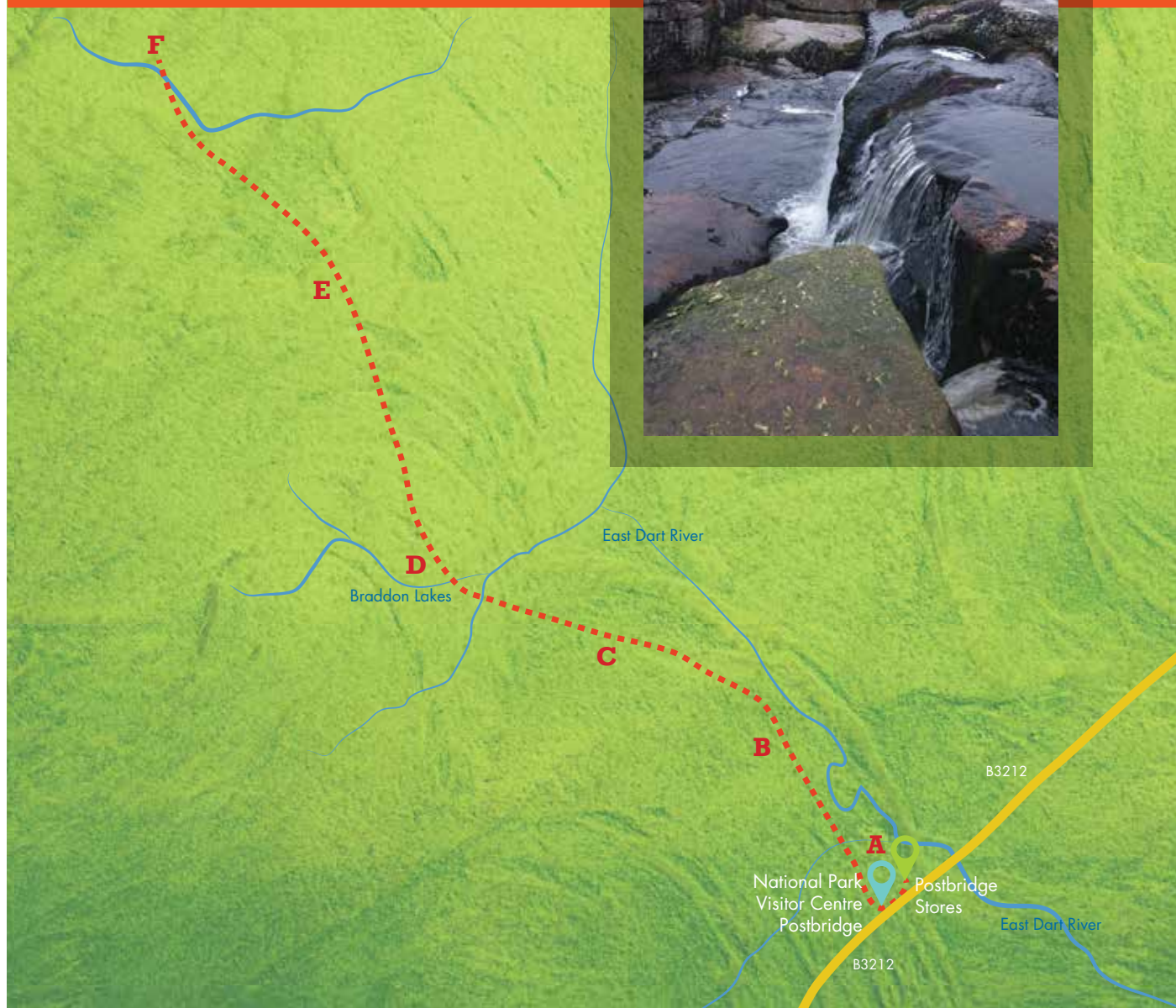
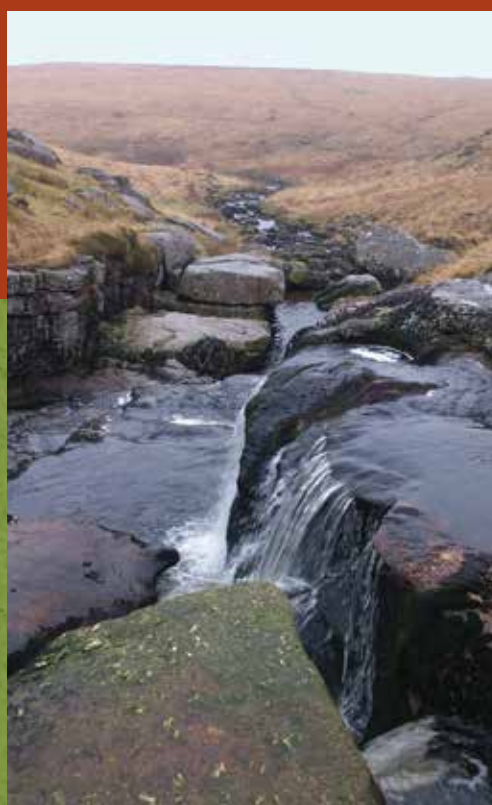
Dartmoor's rivers have long been close to my heart. One place I have dipped rather than swam is the East Dart Waterfall. It is a lovely spot and features in my second book, 'Dart the River'. I thought I would share it with you:

Location

The East Dart Waterfall can be found about 5 kilometres below the source of the East Dart (the East and West Dart join at Dartmeet). It is a beautiful spot and (if the river isn't in flood) one of the possible crossing points for the East Dart. For somewhere that feels so remote, this waterfall has relatively easy (but mostly uphill) access from Postbridge.

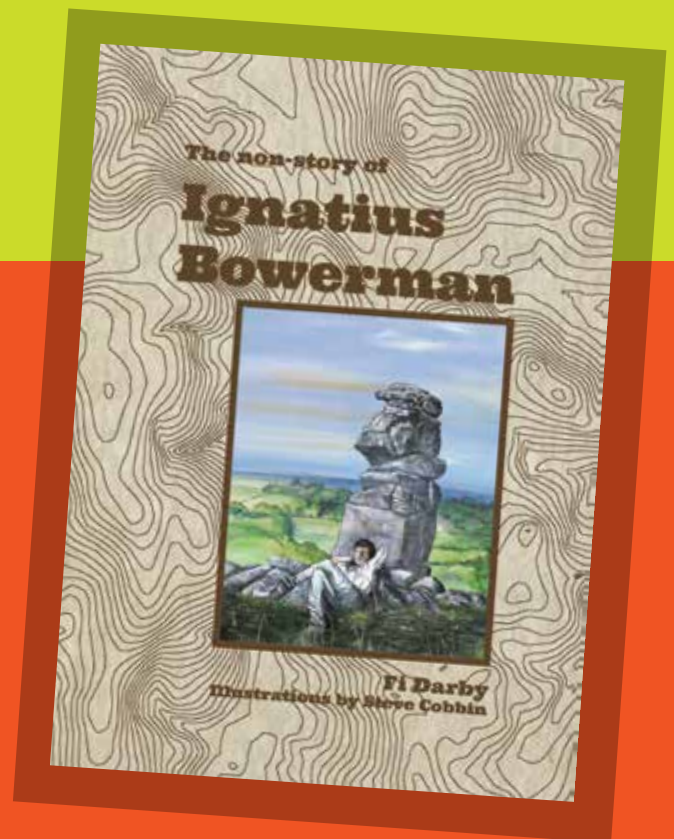
Safety

Whilst this is a relatively easy walk it does not always follow defined paths. We recommend a map and compass and learning how to use them before you set off. The rivers on Dartmoor can rise very quickly; be wary of this as you approach the East Dart and don't take any risks. If you are ever intending to swim or dip, don't go alone and again, be aware of changes in river levels.



FOOT FILE

LENGTH: 6.5 kilometres (return)
HEIGHT GAIN: 175 metres
TIME: 2 hours (return)
SUITABLE: This walk is mainly uphill on the way out and over rough terrain. Basic navigation skills are required as not all sections have visible paths.
START/FINISH: Postbridge car park SX 646 788
TERRAIN: Mixed terrain, uphill, usually wet underfoot, some stream crossings, open moorland.
BRING: OS Explorer OL28 Dartmoor, compass, full waterproofs, walking boots, hot drink, whistle and torch. Tell someone where you are going and when you expect to be back.
PUBLIC TRANSPORT: Tricky but there are buses in the summer. Check times on National Rail Enquiries.
PARKING: Postbridge car park, voluntary charge. Pop into the Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centre while you are there and buy a copy of our children's book 'Dart the River' which features the East Dart waterfall.
NEARBY ATTRACTIONS: Wistman's Wood, High Moorland Visitor Centre (Princetown), Warren House Inn (pub), Believer Forest.



PHOTOGRAPH BY TWO BLONDES

- A** Leave the car park (SX 646 788) on the path behind the visitor centre and toilets.
- B** Follow this path north west for nearly a kilometre until you reach more open moorland (SX 64289 79324).
- C** Keep following the path uphill and north west as it skirts around some walled boundaries and passes an ancient settlement (Roundy Park on your map).
- D** Cross the streams at Braddon Lake ('lakes' on Dartmoor are often streams) the ground will be wet here (SX 63489 79674).
- E** Continue heading north west until you meet a stile in the boundary wall below a rocky outcrop (SX 63224 80476).
- F** Climb the stile and continue north west for around 1 kilometre until you reach the waterfall (SX 62739 81039). Take some time to explore before you head back; this is a beautiful and wild spot.

If you enjoy walking then we recommend learning basic navigation skills. This summer the Two Blondes are running three Dartmoor navigation workshops:

- Saturday June 3rd Navigation for beginners (over 18s only)
- Saturday July 1st Navigation for beginners (over 18s and ladies only)
- Saturday September 2nd Navigation consolidation (over 18s only)

Contact us on admin@twoblondeswalking.com or visit our Facebook page for more information.

Our three children's books, 'The Non-Story of Ignatius Bowerman', 'Dart the River' and 'The Dartmoor Christmas Tree' are available from local bookshops, Dartmoor National Park Visitor Centres, our shop www.twoblondeswalking.com, Visit Dartmoor or Amazon. ■

