

A Bridge Too Far

Cloud Farm in the Doone Valley

A weekend with Mel Harvey 2011

We had promised ourselves a visit to Cloud Farm since a visit in June for afternoon tea with Mum & Robert.

It had been an exciting journey in. The road we had used previously was closed for bridge repairs (bridge number 1), so we had to follow a diversion down a very steep road and across a narrow bridge at Brendon into Leeford before following the lane into Malmsmead.

It was very narrow, and several times the hedges folded the wing mirrors in. - We just prayed that we did not meet anything coming the other way!



After pitching up with our back to the river, we set out for a short stroll to Doone Farm via the fields before enjoying an icecream and walking back via Cloud Farms driveway.





Next morning we were awake early, and had a lie in while the sun rose over the hills to warm the valley. By 10.30 we were making our way up Badgworthy Water on a circular walk of supposedly 8 miles, but a bridge was missing (bridge number 2), and the ford too deep to cross.



So we had to continue for another couple of mile up the valley, before trekking back to where we thought our path went. The guide book said to follow an "indistinct path through braken, heather and later rough grassland", which we did, but lost the path! The views were good though.



We still didn't find it, even though we retraced our steps, so we returned the way we had come, arriving back at site some five and a half hours after leaving. We were tired and foot sore. Mel had a lie down while I had a shower, then I sat in the sun for a while with a book. As Mel came out to join me, the sun sank behind the hill, so we retired to the van and I got dinner underway while Mel showered. By now we were aching and feeling 20 years older!

Next morning after a cooked breakfast, we set off for a 2 mile round walk to Ore Church.

We got the hard bit up & over the hill done 1st, and from then on it was downhill to the Church and relatively flat back to site.



Oare Church is where Lorna Doone is supposed to have been shot dead during her wedding to John Ridd. The church is in need of serious attention, but it is still lovely.



The workmen were still working on the bridge as we crossed it, but assured us that by tomorrow there would be no problem!

It took us 2 hours to get back to the van. Mel was walking painfully slowly. Later in the day we watched people arrive for an orienteering race the next day while I enjoyed Tea and Plum & apple pie at the tea rooms, while Mel ate an icecream