

An introduction to

LETTERBOXING

In Pendle

What is Letterboxing?

This is a healthy outdoor pursuit that involves map reading, orienteering, treasure hunting and clerical skills! Letterboxing is a sport, a hobby and for some, an obsession!

This sport is highly developed on Dartmoor, where there are over 37,000 letterboxes across the moor! The first letterboxes were laid in the 1840's and there are hundreds of people out there on that moor hunting for letterboxes, anxious to increase their scores. Those who have found more than 100 letterboxes are eligible to join the 100 club, and there are currently around 13,600 members. There are badges for those with over 100, 500, 1,000, 2,000, 3,000, 4,000 letterboxes visited, and a very special badge for those who gain over 5,000. (See - www.dartmoorletterboxing.org)

In September 2005, John Kirk and Veronica Brown spent a few fun days tracking down letterboxes, and with training from an experienced couple (who had a tally in excess of 6,000) managed to collect about 12! The only problem is that Dartmoor is over 300 miles from Pendle, and it just seemed a good idea to lay a series of letterboxes in our local area for anyone who wanted to give it a try. We now have the right to roam our moors, and all letterboxes are hidden on land subject to this right.

What is in a letterbox?

A letterbox is a waterproof container (or often one inside another) and this contains a site logbook and a rubber stamp. It is hidden out of sight of anyone not looking for it, and the clues as to location need to be fairly precise to aid a find.

What does the letterboxer need?

You need, in addition to suitable clothing for the moor and the weather, (and your lunch) the following items: -

Your log book. (plain paper is best to take the stamp.)

An ink pad, minimum of 2 inches (50mm square)

Your personal rubber stamp.

A pen

A compass

A map of the area, preferably the 1:25,000 Explorer series

What does a letterboxer do?

The main elements involve hunting down the location of a letterbox, and following precisely the clues given to find the exact location.

Once the box is found, one would take an impression of the stamp contained within and any notes you would care to make in your logbook. Each letterbox is named.

Enter your details and your stamp in the site logbook, along with any comments you would like to make.

Carefully put the letterbox back together again and leave it watertight. Put it back exactly where it was found. It needs to be out of sight to the casual passer by. Leave it as you found it (with the exception of an extra entry in the log) exactly where you found it.

There is one big problem with Letterboxing, and that relates to vandals, idiots and general spoilsports. There is no world shortage. The clue sheets need to be protected and only copied or passed on to anyone, who is deemed sensible, who will not pinch, destroy or hide elsewhere the letterbox or its contents. All these people do is spoil someone else's pleasure at a find. If you find a letterbox that has been robbed or is saturated or otherwise in need of maintenance, please contact the owner named in the log. As there are only 12 letterboxes in the area and all have been laid (and are owned) by John Kirk, please contact him on 07711 173 844.

Finding letterboxes does not involve turning stones or turf or in any other way despoiling the landscape. Letterboxers leave no litter other than properly prepared letterboxes, and respect the wild moorland. If you have a clue list, then go for it! - Good Letterboxing!

Clue Interpretation.

The first clue item in a 100m grid reference e.g. SD 829 357

To use this you need your map. A good tip is to photocopy the map of the area of the letterboxes and mark on the copy the grid references. This will show you the extent of the walk required in collecting the boxes and the approximate location. By the end of the walk your photocopy of your map will be dog-eared, but your map will still be neat and reusable!

Once you are at the approximate location (100M or so) the second clue will pick a prominent point in the locality from which to narrow your search. (e.g. Ordnance Column) and tell you the approximate distance from the prominent point.

The third clue will give a direction from the hiding place to three reference points using magnetic north. (If you can't see them, you are in the wrong place!) Now you need your compass! If clue two says 10 paces from Ordnance column and clue 3 says OS column 220 degrees, then the hiding place is 10 paces on 40 degrees from the column! (220 - 180 (opposite direction) = 40)

The fourth clue will describe the hiding place. The difficulty of finding the boxes should be low, in comparison to most on Dartmoor!

Boulsworth Leaves Series

Box Clues

Box 1 SD 926 358

The Pendle Way path climbs Boulsworth and reaches the Abbot Stone. This huge block of Gritstone is weathered with groves that resemble the flutes in an Abbot's mitre.

Box 1 is about 40 metres from the base of the Abbot Stone. (Go in the direction of the strip of land between 2 reservoirs) From Box, Abbot Stone 93 degrees, White coloured farm 6 degrees, Pendle Hill 299 degrees.

Box is under triangular flat rock (60cm X 60cm X 1Metre) projecting over the edge of a low escarpment near the northern corner of large sloping slab of rock

BOX 2 SD 929 356

From the Abbot Stone, follow the path to the summit trig point. 100m to the SW is Lad Law rock, a rock shaped like a pointing hand, and inscribed upon its southern base with its name. About 25 metres away from the rock is a stile over a fence. (Do not go over it!)

Box 2 is about 20 Metres from Lad Law Rock. Lad Law Rock 40 degrees, Dove Stone 162 degrees, Burnley Wind Farm 200 degrees

Box is under a conspicuous slab of rock 3Metres X 4 Metres situated about 4 metres from stile and is hidden on stile side of slab.

BOX 3 SD 932 358

Weather Stones lies about 250M ENE of the summit trig point. Its most distinguished feature is a wind made pothole in one of the first rocks in the group that is nearly big enough to have a bath in! This is the key to box 3.

Box 3 is just 7 Metres away from the pothole. OS column 246 degrees, RHS of pothole rock 284 degrees, LHS of pothole rock 246 degrees.

From the box the OS column is seen over the left side of the pothole rock. The box is therefore behind the pothole rock, under a big rock slab. A growth of bilberry hides the gap under the rock.

BOX 4 SD 936 361

It can be a boggy tramp across the moor to Little Saucer Stones. It is drier to take a line either right or left of the ridge of the hill. The Key feature of this group of stones is a "logan stone" The dictionary describes a logan as a perched boulder that is finely balanced and the weight of a person can make it rock. This one is one of the first stones encountered and looks like a small beached whale. After you have finished playing on the rocking stone, box 4 is just 30 metres away.

Nose of Logan (rocking stone) 310 degrees, Dove Stone 196, Weather Stones 228.

Box 4 is under a stone at the southern edge of Little Saucer Stones, and 5 metres from a drainage ditch. If you look at the stones from the ditch, the box is under the stone that looks like it was the filling in a stone sandwich that has partially squeezed out to the left!

BONUS BOX 4A

Just 6 paces away from box 4 is your bonus box 4A

Go ENE from box 4 and you will see a 2 Metre square slab, just south of a stone that looks like a cobbler's last, and just before a fairly round boulder. Box 4A is under the slab.

BOX 5 SD 938 363

Take the new stile over the fence and go on past a gaping monster rock to Great Saucer Stones. The top stone is heavily potholed and looks like a giant molar tooth. The Great Saucer is almost a natural stone circle when seen from on top of the "molar", and some of the stones on the northern side of the ring have potholes on their sides, that show that they were once upright and have toppled over in the past.

The key to box 5 is a line of shooting butts.

Line of butts 344 degrees, Beaver Farm 310 degrees Crow Hill 82 degrees

From the top block of the Great Saucer, walk about 15 paces east until you are exactly in line with the line of butts going down the hill. Walk another careful 10 paces in the direction of the butts and you will be on top of the rock under which box 5 is hidden.

Find a way down the 3' drop to a small shelf. You will notice that half a pace each way and the butts go out of line. With the butts exactly in line, look under the rock right behind you. There is a patch of white lichen. It is well hidden and down a significant hole.

BOX 6 SD 940 363

200 metres east of the Great Saucer is Fox Stones. The main group has a huge stone that looks like a fallen Egyptian obelisk, edge up. Near the SW end of the obelisk are some prehistoric stone carvings. Ignore these, and go to the NE end of the great rock. You will need to descend around another huge slab to get to the NE of the obelisk.

When stood directly over box 6, Great Saucer top block 280 degrees, Beaver Farm 316, Crow hill 84 degrees.

When down in the rocks with your nose almost touching the NE point of the great obelisk, box 6 is hidden close by. Put out your left arm and the box is under the rock to your left above waist height.

BOX 7 SD 941 362

100 metres east of the obelisk is the last group of Fox Stones. The last large rock looks diamond shaped when you are approaching, but looks more like a 5 metre long bicycle saddle when you stand on it.

White colour farm above (and well beyond) Broad Head Stones 25 degrees, Beaver Farm 310 degrees, Pendle Hill 280 degrees.

Box 7 is under this stone.

BONUS BOX 7A

The bonus box is 10 metres away on 310 degrees. There are some rocks in the way, so you will need to go N and then W. On the NW side of the cluster of rocks is a rock almost 1M cube that has a curious reddish brown colour. Bonus Box 7A is hiding under its west side.

BOX 8 SD 944 367

Head NE across the open moor to Broad Head Stones. Box 8 should be the easiest box to find, it has a purpose built cairn in which it lives. If approaching the stones along the side of a drainage ditch, it should be obvious straight ahead at the upper (right) end of the rash of stones.

Top block of Great Saucer 230 degrees, Beaver Farm 290 degrees, Brink Ends 360 degrees.

Box 8 lives in the cairn. Three small stones on the west side remove easily to allow access.

BOX 9 SD 941 374

Descend N and avoid a bog by keeping R towards the stream. Follow the stream's valley on the left side of the watercourse down the hill until you spy Stack Hill in the river valley below. (Called Stack Hill Scar on the 1:25000 OS map.) This is a mini Matterhorn shaped peak, and unromantically, it is an ancient spoil heap from mining glacial drift limestone.

Make your way to Stack Hill. Box 9 is at the bottom of the south face.

Stack Hill 335 degrees, Foster's Leap Farm (White) 28 degrees, Wall Corner 290 degrees.

2 metres away from the centre of the south face of Stack Hill is a modest rock. Box 9 is hidden under stones against it.

BOX 10 SD 936 373

From Stack Hill, go North. Cross Saucer Hill Clough and at the top of the steep bank is the Bronte Way / Pendle Way path. Reach the path and turn west (Left). After about 300 metres you will spot another mini Stack Hill in the valley below, and 100 metres further on, two large rocks in the valley bottom. Make your way to the larger and flatter of the two adjacent rocks.

Larger flat stone 160 degrees, Mini Stack Hill 80 degrees, top block of Great Saucer Stones 180 degrees.

From the large flat rock, 15 metres away is a rash of small stones on 340 degrees. Box 10 is hidden in these stones.

Well done if you managed to find all the boxes on the moor!