



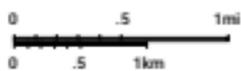
Walks in the Tamar Valley

Bere Ferrers Station to Bere Alston

Via Calstock viaduct
along the Tamar Valley
Discovery Trail

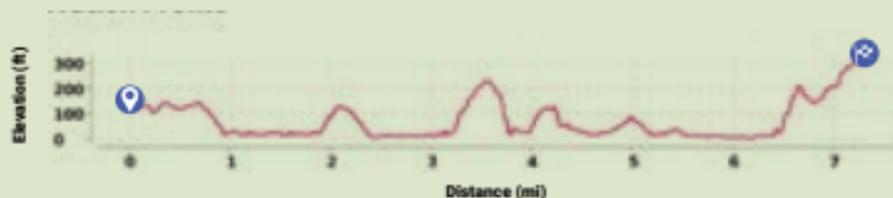
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Elevation Profile



Bere Ferrers Station to Bere Alston

Start/finish

Bere Ferrers Station
SX 452 635, PL20 7JR

Distance

7½ miles (12.1km)

Time

4 hours

Terrain

Steep ascent/descent over
South Hooe peninsula

Toilets

None on route

Difficulty Rating

Strenuous

Public Transport

Rail services Tamar Valley Line
to/from Gunnislake and Plymouth;
bus services to/from Bere Alston
and Tavistock

Dogs

Under control at all times (livestock in fields); non-dog-friendly stiles; on leads at South Ward Farm and fields near Bere Alston Station

Map

OS Explorer 108 Lower Tamar Valley & Plymouth; OS Landranger 201 Plymouth & Launceston

Note

Parking at the station is reserved for rail users. If arriving by car and intending to take the train back to Bere Ferrers after your walk, park sensibly where Fore Street widens (in the village) and walk up to the station to start the walk.

A wonderful walk upriver along the Tamar Valley Discovery Trail, via sweeping pasture fields, woodland and quiet lanes, enjoying glorious views along the Tamar at every turn.

The Tamar Valley Discovery Trail (TVDT) is a 31-mile waymarked walking route that forms part of the Tamara Coast to Coast Way (TCCW), an 87-mile route linking Cremyll on the south coast of Cornwall to Marsland Mouth on the north, following the river Tamar from sea to source as closely as possible. This beautiful walk heads upriver on the west side of the peaceful Bere peninsula, enjoying glorious views and passing under the impressive viaduct at Calstock. Use the picturesque Tamar Valley Line to access the start, then hop on the train again at the end of your walk!

The Route

1. Bere Ferrers Station (SX 452 635).

From the station – on the main line between Plymouth and London Waterloo from 1890 until the 1960s (the branch line to Gunnislake was retained as the Tamar Valley Line) – head down the access road and turn right on Station Road.

2. Station Road (SX 453 634).

Where the road bears left, turn right (also Station Road), joining the TVDT.

The lane deteriorates to a track, passing under the railway line.

Cross a stile by the next gate; keep straight on across the field, then along the left edge of two more fields, cresting the hill midway.

Enjoy wonderful views to the mid-20th-century Tamar Bridge, spanning the river between Plymouth and Saltash alongside Isambard Kingdom Brunel's railway bridge (1859). There is extensive saltmarsh upriver on the Devon shore: the estuaries of the Tamar and its tributaries – the Lynher (Cornish side) and Tavy (Devon side) – host more than 30% of Devon and Cornwall's saltmarsh.

In medieval times Cargeen, seen on the opposite shore, traded in cured Tamar salmon. From the 19th and into the 20th century the village was linked by ferry to Thorn Point. Market garden produce was ferried

over for onward transport to London or Plymouth by train from Bere Ferrers.

3. Thorn Point (SX 441 631).

In the bottom corner of the field note a stile in the hedge ahead, but do not cross over (a 'there-and-back' across marshy ground to Thorn Point). Turn right, alongside beautiful oak trees.

At field end follow the hedge right to cross a V-stile, then negotiate damp ground via boardwalks. On old maps 'Egypt' denotes a farm settlement nearby; the creek at Liphill is sometimes referred to as 'Egypt Bay' (because of its supposed similarity to the Nile delta!).

Continue along the lower edge of two more fields, then follow a narrow path towards Liphill Quay, built to service local lead and silver mines (and later – before the coming of the railway – the needs of local market gardeners). Two parallel mineral lodes run north–south along the peninsula. The mines – many dating back to

medieval times – were some of the most prized in England, and originally owned by the king. Smuggling activity was also once linked with this tucked-away spot. Negotiate boardwalks, cross the slipway and turn right to find a path junction.

4. Liphill Quay (SX 444 639).

Turn left along a narrow path. Cross a stile; continue along the edge of two fields, alongside beautiful hornbeam trees. Eventually the path enters woodland and crosses a bridge to meet a lane.

5. Tuckham Bridge (SX 444 644).

Turn left, uphill, then descend towards the Tamar. Pass Clamoak – entering the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape World Heritage Site – then follow the lane upriver. Look out for a wooden installation on the left, carved with representations of local wildlife; opposite a track leads to the South Tamar Mine. In the 19th century, the advent of steam

pumping enabled mining to extend under the river; in 1856 (fortunately on a Sunday, so no lives were lost) water burst into mine, stopping profitable extraction in its tracks. Pass a limekiln in a garden (right), then Weir Quay Boatyard (The Yard Café: not open every day), site of an 18th-century quay and, in the 19th century, the Tamar Smelting Works, servicing the South Hooe mines just upriver. Pass a lane to Cotts (there's a VR postbox on the corner). Across a broad meander of the river look for Pentillie Castle (on the Cornish side), built in 1698 and largely rebuilt in 1810.

6. Hole's Hole (SX 430 653).

At Holes Hole (there's a limekiln on the quay) pass a house called the Basket Factory, denoting its former use; the quay here was also built to serve local mines. The house on the lane is the former Tamar Hotel, hosting guests arriving by boat. The prominent white building ahead,

on the Devon side of the river, is South Hooe which (with North Hooe), was the richest silver mine in the area in the 19th century. The restored engine house is concealed by trees.

As the lane bears right out of Hole's Hole, look out for a footpath on the left.

Ascend very steeply through woodland. The gradient eventually eases; at a path junction keep ahead over a stile, then follow the right hedge to a lane. Turn left for a few paces, then turn right into a field. Follow the right edge, descending gently: look out for Cotehele Quay upriver. Continue down the right edge of the next two fields, descending very steeply (poles advised), to find steps and a kissing gate. The path crosses a boardwalk and enters a field; head uphill, pass a footpath post and exit via a gate. In the woods nearby are the ruins of North Hooe mine buildings.

When you come to a path junction there is the option to slightly shorten the walk, by heading inland past Lockridge Farm and onwards to Bere Alston. You can find details of this walk on the website.

7. Path junction near Braunder (SX 428 662).

To continue on the route passing under the Calstock viaduct, turn left, descending down along a path to a boardwalk. Cross the boardwalk and head up steps into a field. Turn right, uphill, along the edge of two fields, levelling in the second.

Downriver spot a white building at Halton Quay on the Cornish bank: St Indract's Chapel, formerly the quay office and consecrated in 1959.

At field end keep ahead at a path junction to negotiate a combe.

In the next field, turn right, downhill, then follow the bottom edge. At field end pass through a strip of woodland: in the 19th century these slopes

produced flowers for export to Plymouth and London markets. Continue straight on below fields to reach buildings at South Ward Farm (South Ward Mine engine house – the mine originated in the 13th century, reopening in the 18th/19th – was converted into the farmhouse). Head up the drive to reach a track junction (private road to Ward Cottage ahead).

8. Ward Mine Farm (SX 426 667).

Turn left through a gateway to pass immediately in front of Ward Mine Farm, then through another a gate (there's no visible evidence of the mine, which operated in the 13th and 19th centuries). Pass picnic tables, cross a track and enter woodland.

Descend towards the river opposite Cotehele Quay, its range of 18th- and 19th-century buildings visible through the trees. Follow the path through the wood and then continue along the left edge of a big pasture field to

reach a path junction. Keep straight on through a big metal gate, heading gently downhill on a grassy track.

9. North Ward Farm (SX 426 685).

Where the track bears away right, turn left over a stile, then follow a permissive path along the riverside embankment, built in the 19th century to create agricultural land. Danescombe Valley House, built in the 1850s, stands on the opposite bank at a big river bend. For much of the 20th century it was run as a small hotel for visitors arriving by boat. Continue on towards the delightful Cornish village of Calstock, passing under the railway viaduct (built 1904–7 to connect the railway at Bere Alston with the East Cornwall Mineral Railway – now the Tamar Valley as far as Gunnislake) to reach a path junction near Ferry Farm, which functioned as the Passage Inn during the 19th century.

10 Ferry Farm (SX 434 685).

Continue along the embankment path, eventually curving left towards woodland. Ascend rough steps to a footpath junction; turn right to find another footpath post.

11 Bottom of Butshill Wood (SX 435683).

Turn sharp left and ascend through Butspill Wood. At the top the path drops a little below Buttspill; keep ahead at a path junction. Below the path, in the trees, fenced-off shafts are yet another reminder of the area's industrial past.

Leave the wood via a kissing gate. At a footpath post keep ahead to cross a stream then head up the field, alongside woodland, aiming for a couple of houses. Go through a kissing gate to reach a lane. Turn right; pass under two railway bridges (the line to Gunnislake, and then Plymouth), then turn left to find Bere Alston Station, which opened in

1890 and was important for the onward transport of local market garden produce into the early 20th century.



**Signal box, Bere Ferrer Station:
the station's original name was
Bere Ferris**



A beautiful view upriver across the saltmarsh towards Weir Quay, with Kit Hill in the distance



Pentillie Castle, on the Cornish side of the river, seen from Holes Hole



One of the loveliest stretches of the TVDT: looking upriver from the South Hooe peninsula towards Cotehele Quay: Cotehele House, built between 1485 and 1560, is hidden in the trees



Cotehele Quay from the route of the TVDT



Danescombe Valley House



Calstock's impressive and lofty railway viaduct



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For more walks like this, visit
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Route description and photos by
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