



Walks in the Tamar Valley

Holmbush Mine

An easy and level walk along permissive paths through mixed woodland near Kelly Bray, and a visit to the ruins of Holmbush Mine, at one time the most important mine in the Callington district.

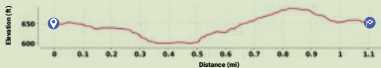
Click for an interactive map and directions on either the free OS map app or in your browser

<https://explore.osmaps.com/route/17570472/>



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Elevation Profile



Holmbush Mine

Start/finish

Holmbush Wood parking area just under ½ mile (0.8km) north of Kelly Bray, on Stoke Climsland road SX 357721, PL17 8PN

Distance

Just under 1½ miles (2.4km)

Time

45 minutes

Terrain

Easy woodland paths and tracks

Toilets

Easy

Difficulty Rating

Moderate

Parking

Holmbush Wood

Public Transport

Bus services (to Kelly Bray) to/from Callington, Launceston, Plymouth, Saltash and Tavistock

Dogs

Under control at all times

Map

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

Note

This trail takes you through areas of historic mining remains and has a number of associated hazards. Please take care not to place yourself and others at risk. Some paths will be muddy in winter.

A gentle stroll through the deciduous woodland and conifer plantations of Holmbush Wood, owned by the Duchy of Cornwall and sandwiched in a cleft between the A388 and the Stoke Climsland road just north of Kelly Bray. The wood is cross-crossed with tracks and paths, and old field boundaries, and popular with dog walkers. This easy circuit explores the woodland before visiting the impressive remains of Holmbush

Mine, which employed 300 people at its peak.

The Route

1 SX 357721 Walk away from the road to find a field gate and information board, which details the fascinating history of Holmbush Mine. Pass between the two and immediately turn right over a low bank. Turn sharp right; cross the next low bank and turn left. At the next junction of paths bear right on the broadest path. The path initially passes through mature conifers and parallels the Stoke Climsland road. Reach a path T-junction.

2 SX 358724 Turn left, flanked by bright rosebay willowherb in summer, and a mix of deciduous saplings – birch, oak, sweet chestnut, sycamore, beech, mountain ash – as well as patches of conifers. Reach a T-junction in a more open area.

3 SX 355723 Turn right. The path bears left under tall beech trees on reaching the northern end of the wood, bounded by a hedgebank (there are good views across the fields to Stoke Climsland). At a fork – an old banked track heads straight on – bear left along the northern boundary. The path is narrow and rough, and passes a bench. Reach a path junction on the edge of a stand of conifers and keep ahead through the trees, passing through a gap in an old field bank, to reach a T-junction.

4 SX 352724 Turn left (you'll hear cars hurtling along the A388); keep straight on at a path crossroads, and eventually reach a T-junction.

5 SX 354722 Turn right on a broad track; before reaching a gate (onto the A388) bear left through a glade of mature beech trees. Pass through a gap in a bank, then bear slightly right, alongside a hedgebank, to

reach the old mine buildings on the southern edge of the wood. Unless you're walking in winter you won't see the chimney, or the ruined winding engine house, until you're just about level with the structures.

6 SX 357720 Cross a bank by the chimney, then pass the engine house (a little path on the right winds into the interior of the building, accessed via a ladder). Pick up and follow a narrow path that bears right and threads through the mining site, passing under and between remnants of hard-to-distinguish mine buildings: fenced-off shafts, water wheel and crank pits, a copper crushing house and spoil heaps.

Lead and silver were first mined here in the 17th century; copper ore was produced in the late 18th century and through much of the 19th century. Single specimens of silver lead ore and copper ore, each weighing 1–1½ tons, were

exhibited by Holmbush Mine at the Great Exhibition of 1851.

Between 1877 and 1886 Holmbush ranked alongside other well-known Tamar Valley mines as a prolific arsenic producer; mining ceased for good in 1923. The output of the mine was impressive, particularly considering that prior to its establishment of this area was known as Kilbury, and simply a junction of moorland paths.

The path winds on, passing a second chimney and the ivy-covered castle-like ruin of Hitchen's pumping engine house. Just past the engine house bear left at a junction on a narrow path, overgrown in summer, that leads back to the lower end of the broad beech avenue leading to the mine. Turn right for the car park.



The route passes through a mix of woodland and more open areas, particularly attractive in the summer months



The village of Stoke Climsland, seen from the northern edge of Holmbush Wood



**Chimney and winding engine house,
Holmbush Mine: remnants of a
once-flourishing industry**



**Ivy-covered remains of
Hitchen's pumping engine house**



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For more walks like this, visit
www.tamarvalley.org.uk/walking

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walk please contact us at e:
[tamarvalleynationallandscape@cornwall.
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Tel: **01822 835030**

Route description and photos by
Sue Viccars.