

# KEY TO MAP OF THE TAMAR TRAILS

- Information point
- Public conveniences
- Bike hire
- Picnic area
- Café
- Pub
- Steep Gradient (arrow points uphill)
- Viewpoint
- Location of former mining operations
- Podcast available about this area
- Take care!
- Gawton Gravity Hub: specialist downhill bike trails.
- Walking trail
- Cycling trail
- Horse riding trail
- Trail suitable for buggies
- Dogs must be kept on a lead to prevent disturbance to wildlife / rare ground-nesting birds
- Public Footpaths / other routes with public access

## Mineral Railway Trail

Journey through working coniferous woodland along parts of the old mineral railway that once linked Devon Great Consols Mine with the river port of Morwellham. A wide path with a compacted stone surface, occasionally muddy in places after wet weather. The trail is generally level, with some short steeper sections. From the Tamar Trails Centre north to point of interest 5: 2km - 1 hour each way walking, 20-30 mins cycling. From the Tamar Trails Centre south to point of interest 21: 3km - 1½ hours each way walking, 30-45 mins cycling.

## Wheal Maria Trail

Pass through mixed woodland with spectacular views across the Tamar Valley and its mining heritage. The trail is wide, on compacted stone tracks, with some loose stone in parts. It has some level sections, with a number of steep descents and climbs. 3.5km - 2 hour circuit, walking, from point of interest 5; 40-60 mins cycling.

## Wheal Josiah Trail

(some parts walking only) Explore a variety of mining landscapes. The trail is a wide path, with a generally compacted stone surface, with some gradual gradients and occasional steep sections. 1.5km - 1 hour walking.

## Bedford United Trail

An exciting adventure trail for the intrepid, past fascinating 18th and 19th century mine workings, with great views over the Tamar. The trail is narrow, steep and uneven with steps throughout the route. 2km - ½ hour circuit from the Tamar Trails Centre.

## Chimney Rock Trail

Explore beech, oak and conifer woodland with sweeping views from the steep sides of the Tamar Valley. The trail is narrow and uneven, with a steep descent to South Bedford Mine. To walk this trail as a circuit from the Tamar Trails Centre, the distance is c.5km - c.3½ hours (including descent to former mine site).

## Sheepridge Trail

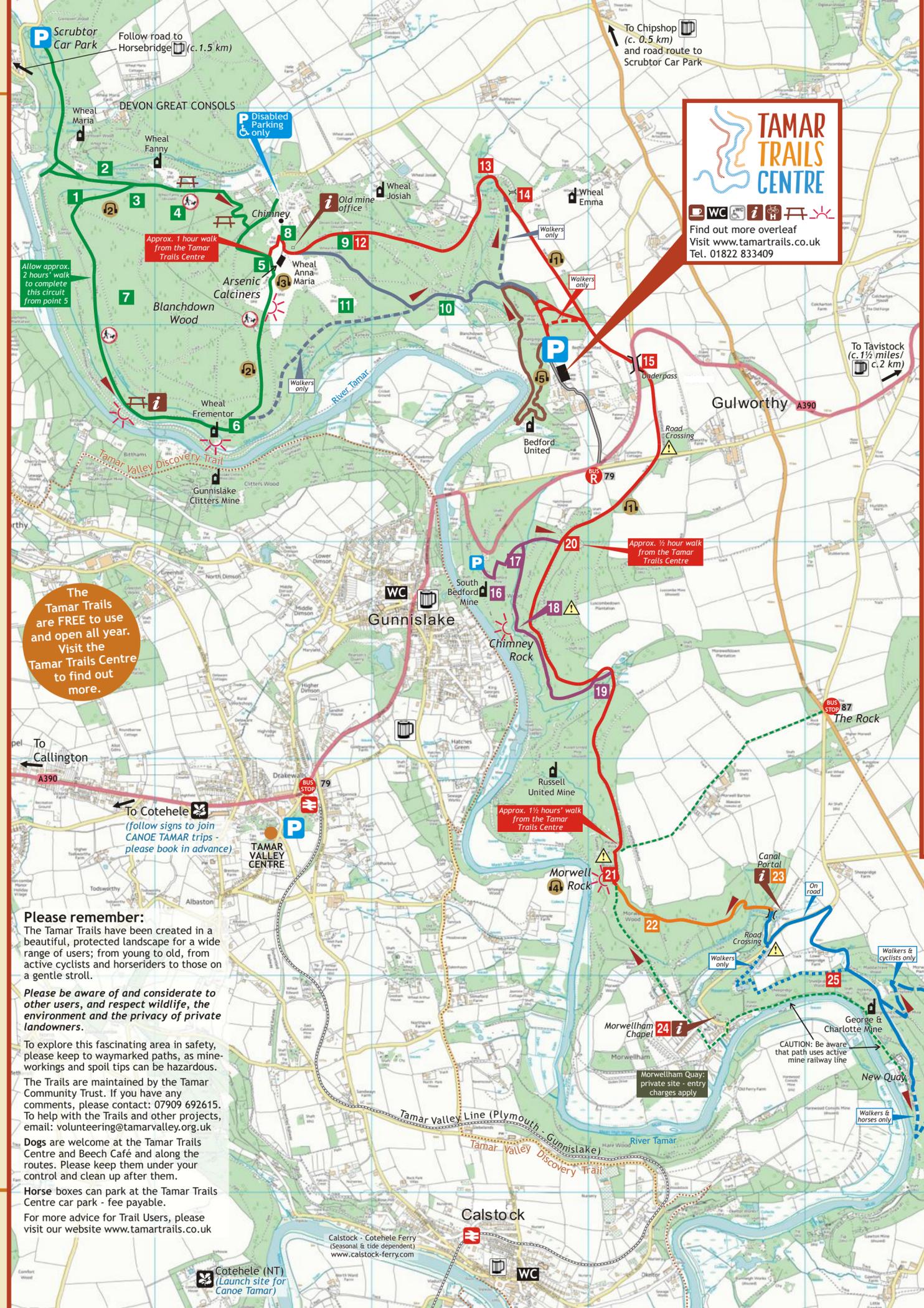
(restrictions on some sections) The trail is uneven with long steep climbs/descents. There is a short road section on the cycling trail. Circuit: 2.5km - 2 hours walking; 40 - 80 mins cycling.

## Canal Tunnel Link

Uneven, some loose stone. Mainly gradual climbs and descents, can be muddy after wet weather. 1.25km - 30 mins walking, 10-15 mins cycling.

## Public Transport Links

- Tamar Valley Line Rail station (Plymouth - Gunnislake)
  - Bus Stop (with service number)
  - Bus stops by request. If boarding, please wait in a safe place for bus to pull in.
- For times and information, visit [www.travelinesw.com](http://www.travelinesw.com) (0871 200 22 33)



**TAMAR TRAILS CENTRE**

Find out more overleaf  
Visit [www.tamartrails.co.uk](http://www.tamartrails.co.uk)  
Tel. 01822 833409

The Tamar Trails are FREE to use and open all year. Visit the Tamar Trails Centre to find out more.

**Please remember:**  
The Tamar Trails have been created in a beautiful, protected landscape for a wide range of users; from young to old, from active cyclists and horseriders to those on a gentle stroll.

**Please be aware of and considerate to other users, and respect wildlife, the environment and the privacy of private landowners.**

To explore this fascinating area in safety, please keep to waymarked paths, as mine-workings and spoil tips can be hazardous.

The Trails are maintained by the Tamar Community Trust. If you have any comments, please contact: 07909 692615. To help with the Trails and other projects, email: [volunteering@tamarvalley.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@tamarvalley.org.uk)

**Dogs are welcome at the Tamar Trails Centre and Beech Café and along the routes. Please keep them under your control and clean up after them.**

Horse boxes can park at the Tamar Trails Centre car park - fee payable.

For more advice for Trail Users, please visit our website [www.tamartrails.co.uk](http://www.tamartrails.co.uk)

## A Family Walk along the Trails



**Length of Route: c.3km Time to Walk: c. 1½ hrs**  
This suggested circular walk is a great introduction to the Tamar Trails: Leave the car park on the path at the far (northern) end. Follow the red trail to the right, signposted to Devon Great Consols. When you reach the T-junction, turn left and follow the trail for c.0.5km to pass near to the site of Wheal Emma<sup>13</sup>. Follow the red trail round to the left and continue through the remains of Wheal Josiah, heading towards the tall hill-top chimney.

## Points of Interest along the Trails

Along some of the Trails you will find a series of numbered markers relating to features of interest.

- 1 Wheal Maria.** In 1844, a great copper strike here founded the Devon Great Consols mine. Wheal Maria was named after the wife of Josiah Hitchens, who had taken out the lease just before the strike. (Wheal is Cornish for mine).
- 2 Wheal Maria.** Rich deposits of copper ore were found in Gard's shaft just 18 fathoms (36m) from the surface. The lode (vein of mineral) was 12m wide and stretched eastwards for over 3km. The large waste dump is from a crusher.
- 3 Wheal Fanny.** When this mine (named after Josiah's daughter) was started in 1845, ore was struck at only 3 fathoms (5.5 m) from surface.
- 4 Blanchdown Wood.** These woods have had only 3 owners since records began: Tavistock Abbey until 1540; the Russell family (later Earls and Dukes of Bedford) until 1959; and the Tavistock Woodlands Estate of the Earls of Bradford, to date.
- 5 Wheal Anna Maria.** Named after the Duchess of Bedford. When the copper waned, Devon Great Consols became the world's largest arsenic mine as demand for pesticides grew. Arsenic ore was refined on site by the 'calcination' process, yielding over 72,000 tons of refined arsenic!
- 6 Wheal Frementor.** The large fenced 'cavern' is a 'gunnis' (an open void left after ore has been removed). The ore here was tin and tungsten hosted in granite. On the Cornish riverbank and valley side (opposite) are the remains of Gunnislake Clitters Mine.
- 7 Blanchdown Wood.** The Earl and his forester, Phil Hutt, developed the 'Bradford-Hutt Plan' for growing conifers. This allows continuous cover in the woodland, despite regular commercial felling.



Remains of the arsenic calciners.



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When you reach the information point situated in the ruins of a former mine office building<sup>7</sup>, take a look at the display panels and explore the fascinating remains of the arsenic calciners.

(For a longer walk, you can join the circular green (Wheal Maria) trail at point 5, winding through Blanchdown Woods - please keep dogs on lead. This includes steep hills and would add c.2 hours to your walk.)

To stay on level paths, retrace your steps back along the red route to the car park.

For those happy to tackle some steeper gradients, and "more adventurous" buggy-pushers, pick up the Wheal Josiah trail (shown on this map in dark blue) to head back towards the Tamar Trails Centre - head east and downhill, past Blanchdown Adit<sup>10</sup> and up through the woods until you rejoin the red trail and follow this back into the car park.

Reward yourself with a drink at the Centre's Beech Café - and start planning the route of your next walk!

**8 Wheal Josiah.** Named after Josiah Hitchens, the deepest shaft of Devon Great Consols was sunk deeper here at the insistence of the Duke of Bedford in the hope of finding tin. Nearby, rare Nightjars have made their home on the heathland that is reclaiming the former mine workings. Visit the information point in the ruined mine office building to learn more about the history of the mine.

**9 Wheal Anna Maria Arsenic Tailings.** The orange sand tips are waste from the 1920s arsenic mining and refining.

**10 Blanchdown Adit.** A good place, particularly after heavy rains, to see orange-coloured water discharging from the Blanchdown Adit. The colour is due to ochre (iron oxide, or 'rust'), a natural pigment once sold for use in paint.

**11 Wheal Anna Maria Copper Tailings.** These dumps contain slimes (residue left after ore 'dressing'), dating from the mine's copper heyday.

**12 Wheal Josiah Railway Tunnel.** The partially collapsed tunnel under the waste rock dump marks the line of the Devon Great Consols Railway. This followed the ridge above the Tamar Valley, to an inclined plane above Morwellham Quay.

**13 Wheal Emma.** The easternmost mine of the Devon Great Consols sett, named after William Morris' mother. Opened in 1848.

**14 Wheal Emma Railway Bridge.** This conserved railway bridge carried an earlier cart track from Wheal Emma to Wheal Josiah.

**15 Bowden's Corner Bridge.** A new underpass has been built alongside the buried remains of the old railway tunnel.

**16 South Bedford Mine.** The various structures on this mine, formerly known as Wheal Luscombe, mostly date from the mid-19th century.

**17 Bedford United Mine Leat.** The remains of a leat can be seen on the left. This man-made watercourse brought water from the Tavistock Canal above Morwellham to power waterwheels for pumping, hauling and crushing at Wheal Russell and Bedford United Mines before returning it to South Bedford Mine.

**18 Chimney Rock.** Perched precariously on the precipitous valley sides overlooking Gunnislake, it commands wonderful views. WARNING - steep drop, keep away from the edge.

**19 Wheal Russell.** A 19th century amalgamation of smaller 18th century mines, which produced copper, tin and arsenic between 1852 and 1891.

**20 The Mineral Railway.** Built by Devon Great Consols in 1858, it ran for 7.5km from the mine to Morwellham.

**21 Morwell Rock.** A rock outcrop high up in Morwell Woods, with panoramic views over the Tamar Valley to Gunnislake and Cornwall. WARNING - steep drop, keep away from the edge.

**22 Devon Great Consols Inclined Plane.** Connected the mineral railway from the mine directly to Morwellham's Great Dock.

**23 Tavistock Canal Tunnel Portal.** This is the southern end of the 1½ mile tunnel, completed in 1817 and the longest canal tunnel in England. The 1803 datestone refers to the start of construction on the canal.

**24 Morwellham Methodist Chapel.** Built in 1859 to serve the river port, it retains most of its original interior and is open daily as an interpretative point on the Trails. (Free admission. Opening times as Morwellham Quay.)

**25 Leat Rock Cutting.** The Trail follows an 18th century mine leat which here cuts deeply through the hard rock outcrop.



Morwellham Chapel - now an interpretative point.

www.tamartrails.co.uk  
01822 833409