

# Discovery Trail

Discover the **Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty** along this 35-mile walking route. Waymarkers guide through scenic woodland, historic river quays and rural villages.

outstanding natural beauty

[www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk)  
[www.devon.gov.uk/walking](http://www.devon.gov.uk/walking)



**TamarValley**  
Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty



# Introduction to the Tamar Valley AONB

## What is an AONB?

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) are designated under the Countryside & Rights of Way Act (2000), and along with National Parks they represent the finest examples of countryside in England and Wales. Designation seeks to conserve and enhance natural beauty; including flora and fauna, geology and landscape features, archaeology and architecture; whilst recognising the needs of the local community and economy.

## When did the Tamar Valley become an AONB?

Cornwall and Devon County Councils first suggested that the Tamar Valley should be designated as an Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty in 1963, but it was not until August 1995 that the designation was finally granted. This is the most recent area to be designated an AONB.

## Why was the Tamar Valley designated?

It is a rare valley and water landscape based around an unspoilt estuary, a unique wildlife resource and a landscape of distinctive heritage.

## Where exactly is the Tamar Valley AONB?

It is located on the border of Cornwall and Devon, and includes the valleys of the Tamar, Tavy and Lynher. The larger section, around the rivers Tamar and Tavy, extends north from the broad estuary at

Plymouth to the intricate, deeply incised river meanders just below Launceston and Tavistock. It borders Dartmoor National Park to the east and takes in Kit Hill to the west. The section around the river Lynher extends west from Saltash and Torpoint to St Germans in south east Cornwall.

## How big is the Tamar Valley AONB?

The AONB covers around 75 square miles (190 square kilometres, 16155.74 hectares). It contains a population in the region of 27,000 people, most in the 30-50 age group.

## What is the Vision for the Tamar Valley AONB?

To ensure that by working together the Tamar Valley AONB is managed in a way that conserves and enhances its unique cultural identity and outstanding natural beauty for the benefit of all the people who live, work and visit the area, now and in the future.

## Highs & Lows

From sea level to 333m at Kit Hill.

## Woodland

There are around 1700 hectares of woodland, of which 1500 hectares are on ancient woodland sites.

## Rivers

Includes the lower parts of the 3 river valleys - Tamar, Tavy and Lynher.

## World Heritage Site

The AONB contains the majority of area 10 of the World Heritage Site for the Cornwall and West Devon Mining Landscape. The AONB has over 100 former mine sites and their associated physical and social infrastructure.



### Farmland

75% of farmland is under grassland, predominantly used for sheep and cattle; there are around 600 holdings ranging from tiny smallholdings to large dairy farms of over 200 hectares.

### Nature Conservation

The tidal waters are a designated European Marine Site consisting of a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) under the EU Habitats Directive and a Special Protection Area (SPA) under the EU Birds Directive.

In addition there are 2247.76 hectares of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), 41 County Wildlife Sites and 1 Local Nature Reserve.

### Local Authorities

The boundary crosses 5 local authority areas (2 counties, 2 districts and Plymouth City). The AONB also borders Dartmoor National Park. The AONB crosses 24 parishes.

- Tamar Valley AONB area
- Trail

### More Information

For more information visit [www.taamrvalleuy.org.uk](http://www.taamrvalleuy.org.uk), find us on Facebook at [www.facebook.co.uk/tvaonb](https://www.facebook.co.uk/tvaonb) or follow us on twitter [www.twitter.co.uk/tvaonb](https://www.twitter.co.uk/tvaonb)




# Exploring the Discovery Trail

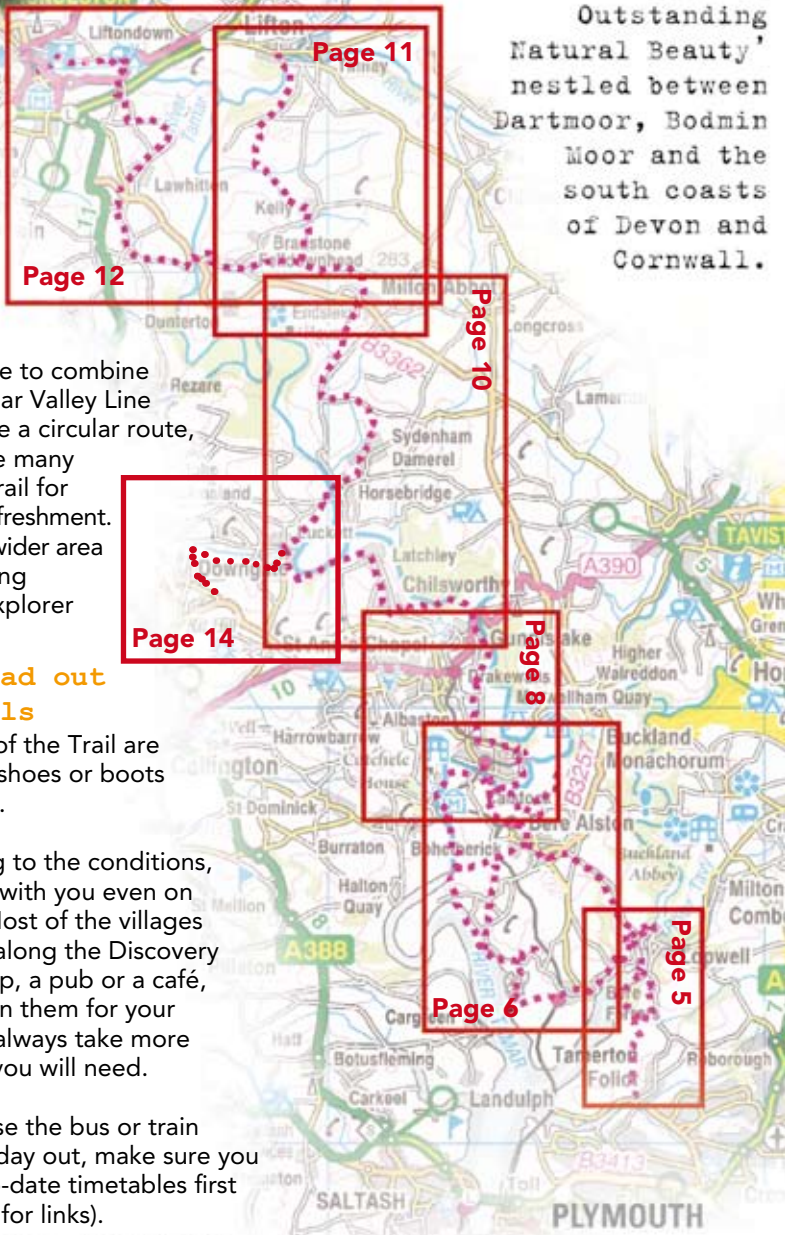
The Tamar Valley is a designated 'Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty', nestled between Dartmoor, Bodmin Moor and the south coasts of Devon and Cornwall.

With the help of this leaflet you can follow the apple signs from Plymouth, or access the Trail at any of the points shown below.

Many people choose to combine a walk with the Tamar Valley Line train service to make a circular route, or take in one of the many villages along the Trail for some well earned refreshment. More details of the wider area can be found by using Ordnance Survey Explorer maps 108 and 112.

## Before you head out onto the Trails

-  Some sections of the Trail are uneven, sturdy shoes or boots should be worn.
-  Dress according to the conditions, and take water with you even on a cloudy day. Most of the villages you encounter along the Discovery Trail have a shop, a pub or a café, but don't rely on them for your refreshments - always take more than you think you will need.
-  If you plan to use the bus or train as part of your day out, make sure you check the up-to-date timetables first (see back page for links).



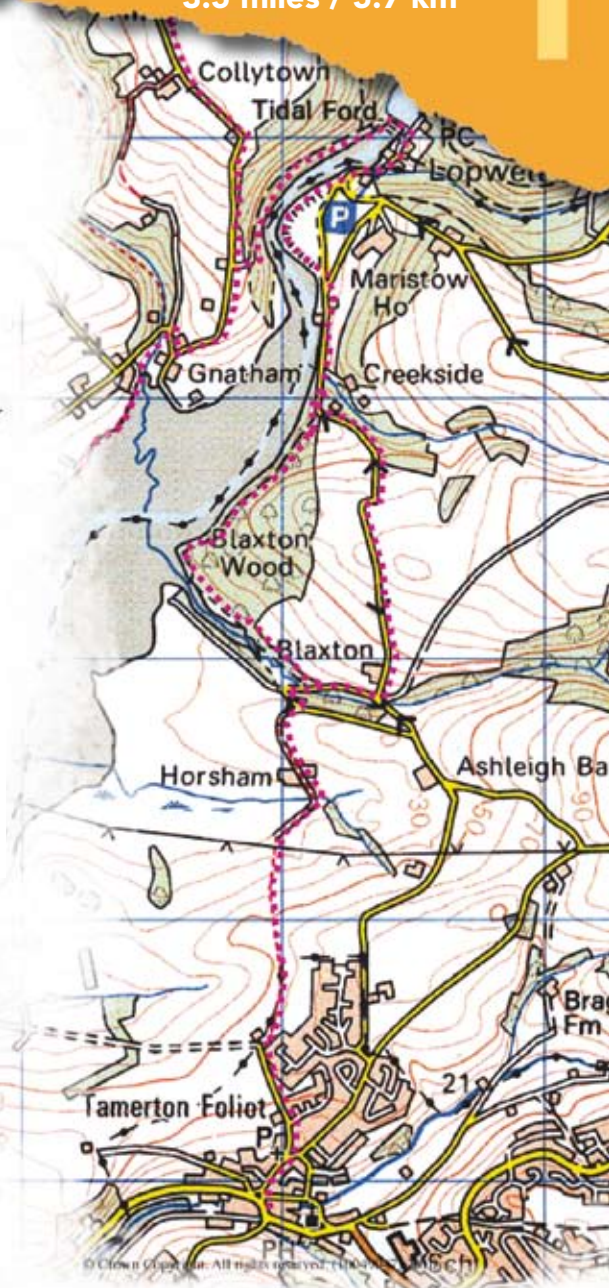
## The Lower Tamar Valley, Plymouth to the Bere Peninsula 3.5 miles / 5.7 km

Follow the waymarkers north out of Tamerton Foliot. Despite what the name may suggest, the first river you will encounter is the River Tavy, a tributary of the Tamar.

After Horsham Farm, there is a seasonal path that takes a scenic route along the Tavy Estuary. This route is closed during the shooting season from 1st October to 1st February, and walkers should follow the alternative route along the quiet road instead at that time.

After about 3.5 miles (5.7km) you will reach the river crossing at Lopwell. **This is a tidal crossing which cannot be passed within 2 hours either side of high tide,** and you should consult the tide times website (see back page of this leaflet) before crossing onto the Bere Peninsula.

Many people choose to start their walk on the Discovery Trail at Lopwell, as there is ample parking and access to public toilets (seasonal opening), as well as information concerning the Lopwell nature reserve. This wildlife haven offers glimpses of marine and woodland animals, including otters. There is also a butterfly meadow behind the barn.



## The Bere Peninsula Link

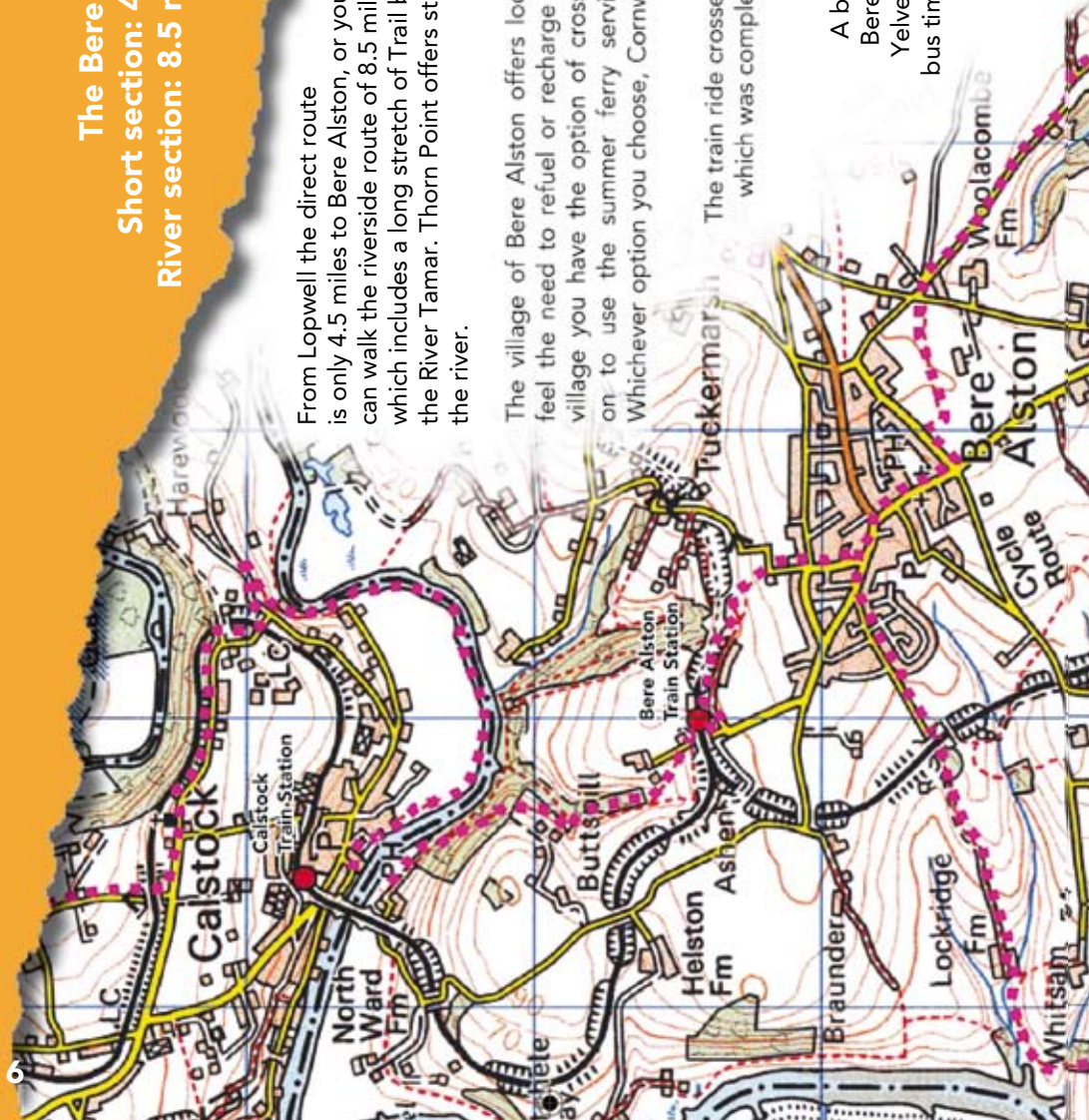
Short section: 4.5 miles / 7km  
River section: 8.5 miles / 13.6 km

From Lopwell the direct route is only 4.5 miles to Bere Alston, or you can walk the riverside route of 8.5 miles, which includes a long stretch of Trail beside the River Tamar. Thorn Point offers stunning views over the river.

The village of Bere Alston offers local shops and services should you feel the need to refuel or recharge your batteries. As you leave the village you have the option of crossing the river by train, or walking on to use the summer ferry service across the river to Calstock.\* Whichever option you choose, Cornwall awaits you on the other side...

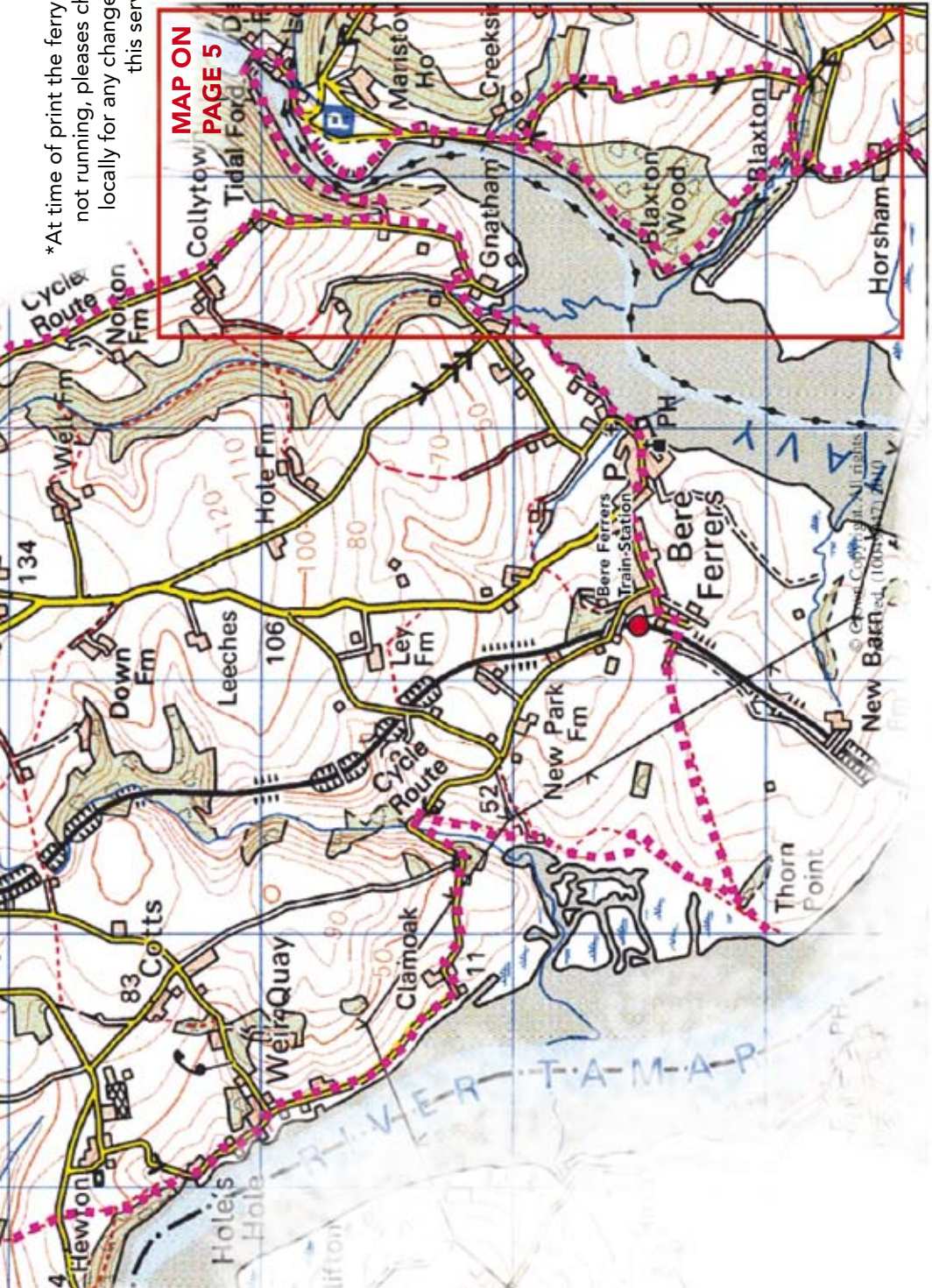
The train ride crosses the spectacular Calstock Viaduct, which was completed in 1907 and offers far-reaching views up and down the river.

A bus service connects Bere Alston and Bere Ferrers with nearby Tavistock and Yelverton. Again, information regarding bus times can be found on the back page of this leaflet.



\*At time of print the ferry was not running, please check locally for any changes to this service.

**MAP ON PAGE 5**



## The Mid Tamar Valley, Calstock to Milton Abbot 13.5 miles / 22 km

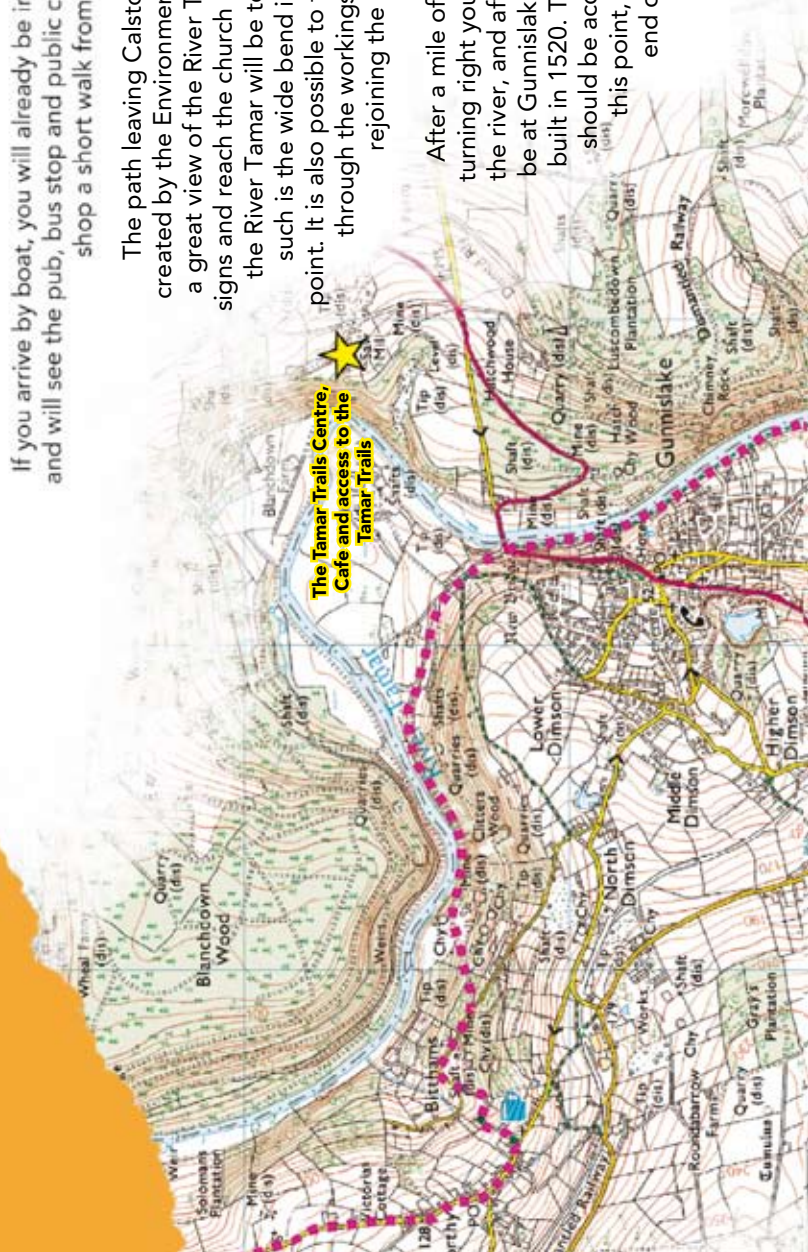
# 3

If you arrive in Calstock by train, the walk to the village centre is all downhill. Walk towards the road from the station and turn left towards the river.

If you arrive by boat, you will already be in the heart of the village and will see the pub, bus stop and public conveniences. There is a shop a short walk from the slipway in Calstock.

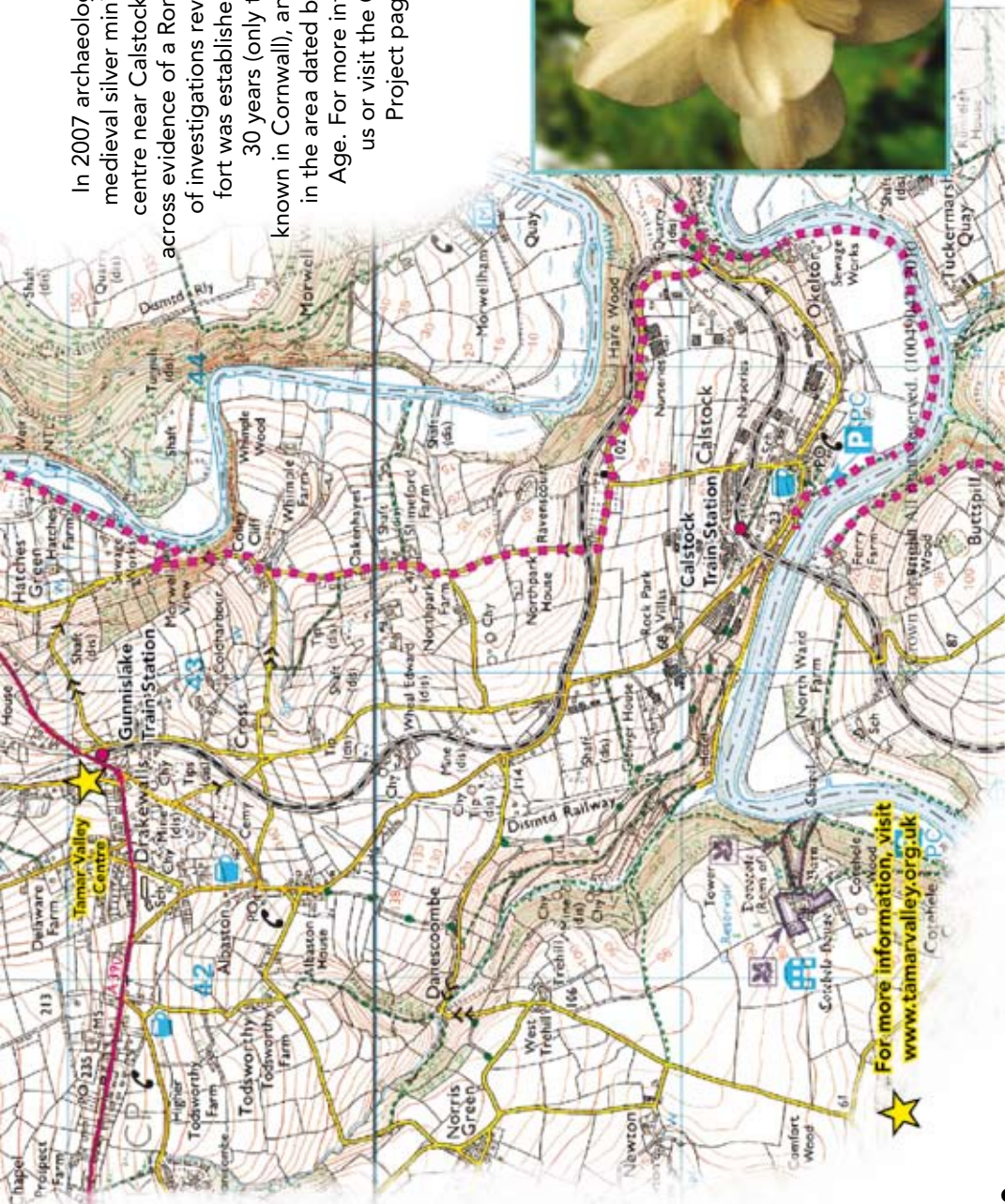
The path leaving Calstock is a permissive route created by the Environment Agency, and provides a great view of the River Tamar. As you follow the signs and reach the church at the top of the village, the River Tamar will be to your North and South, such is the wide bend in the river course at this point. It is also possible to follow a permissive path through the workings of Okel Tor Mine here, rejoining the main trail just up ahead.

After a mile of walking on quiet roads, turning right you will drop back towards the river, and after another mile you will be at Gunnislake New Bridge, originally built in 1520. The village of Gunnislake should be accessed before you reach this point, for shops, pubs and the end of the Tamar Valley Line.





In 2007 archaeologists looking for a medieval silver mining administrative centre near Calstock church stumbled across evidence of a Roman fort. A series of investigations revealed that a large fort was established here for around 30 years (only the third currently known in Cornwall), and that settlement in the area dated back to the Bronze Age. For more information contact us or visit the Calstock Heritage Project page on our website.



The five-mile section between Gunnislake and Horsebridge does not stray too far from the river at any point, thanks in part to access kindly provided by the Duchy of Cornwall.

The hamlets of Chilsworth, Latchley, Luckett and Horsebridge are full of character and typical of the quiet Cornish countryside in this part of the Valley. Horsebridge was originally built in 1437, and as you cross the Tamar here you will walk from Cornwall back into Devon, and uphill to the hamlet of Sydenham Damerel.

Walking North towards Milton Abbot, the valley begins to change from the steep-sided river course between Calstock and Gunnislake to a more gentle, pastoral environment.

Milton Abbot offers the chance for refreshment, and is also linked by bus to Launceston, Tavistock and Okehampton.

As you walk out of Milton Abbot, look behind you for stunning views across to Kit Hill on the Cornish side of the Tamar.

You will shortly have a choice of walking on quiet roads to Launceston, or taking an off-road route, sponsored by local company Ambrosia, to Lifton.

Kit Hill, one of the gems in the AONB.



The Lifton Link, Sponsored by  
Milton Abbot to Lifton  
5.5 miles / 9 km

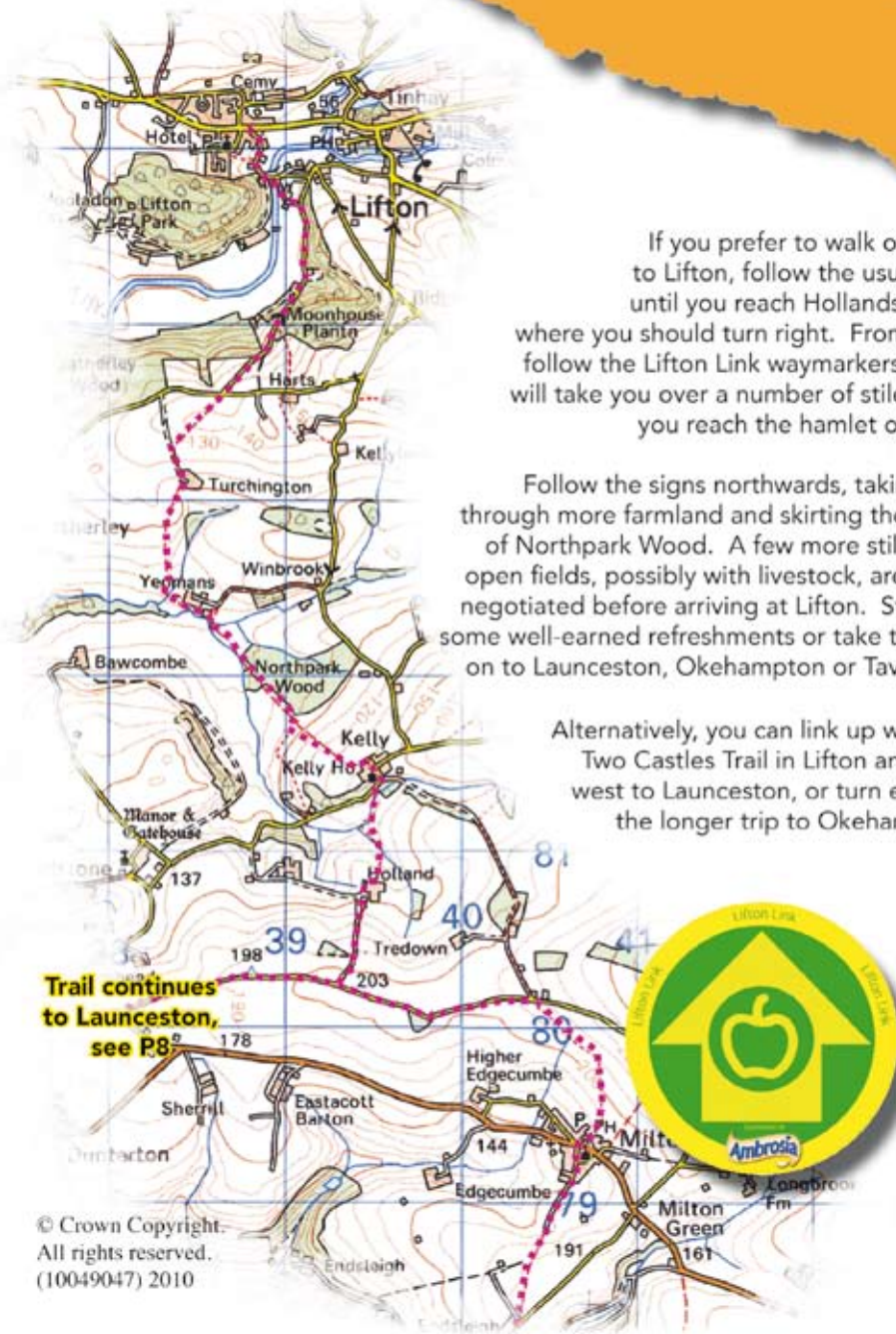


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If you prefer to walk off-road to Lifton, follow the usual sign until you reach Hollands Farm, where you should turn right. From here, follow the Lifton Link waymarkers which will take you over a number of stiles until you reach the hamlet of Kelly.

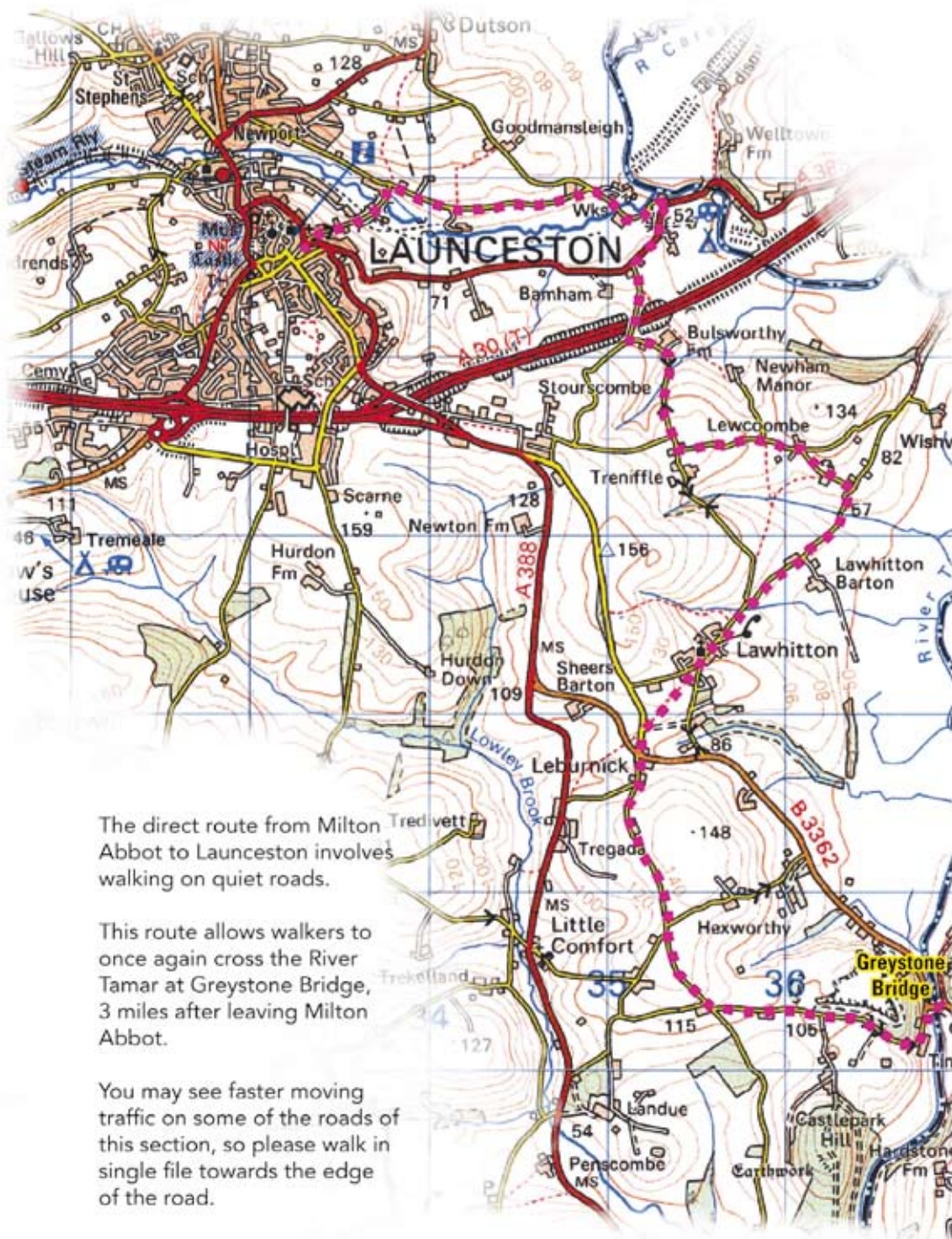
Follow the signs northwards, taking you through more farmland and skirting the edge of Northpark Wood. A few more stiles and open fields, possibly with livestock, are to be negotiated before arriving at Lifton. Stop for some well-earned refreshments or take the bus on to Launceston, Okehampton or Tavistock.

Alternatively, you can link up with the Two Castles Trail in Lifton and walk west to Launceston, or turn east for the longer trip to Okehampton.



Trail continues  
to Launceston,  
see P8

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The direct route from Milton Abbot to Launceston involves walking on quiet roads.

This route allows walkers to once again cross the River Tamar at Greystone Bridge, 3 miles after leaving Milton Abbot.

You may see faster moving traffic on some of the roads of this section, so please walk in single file towards the edge of the road.

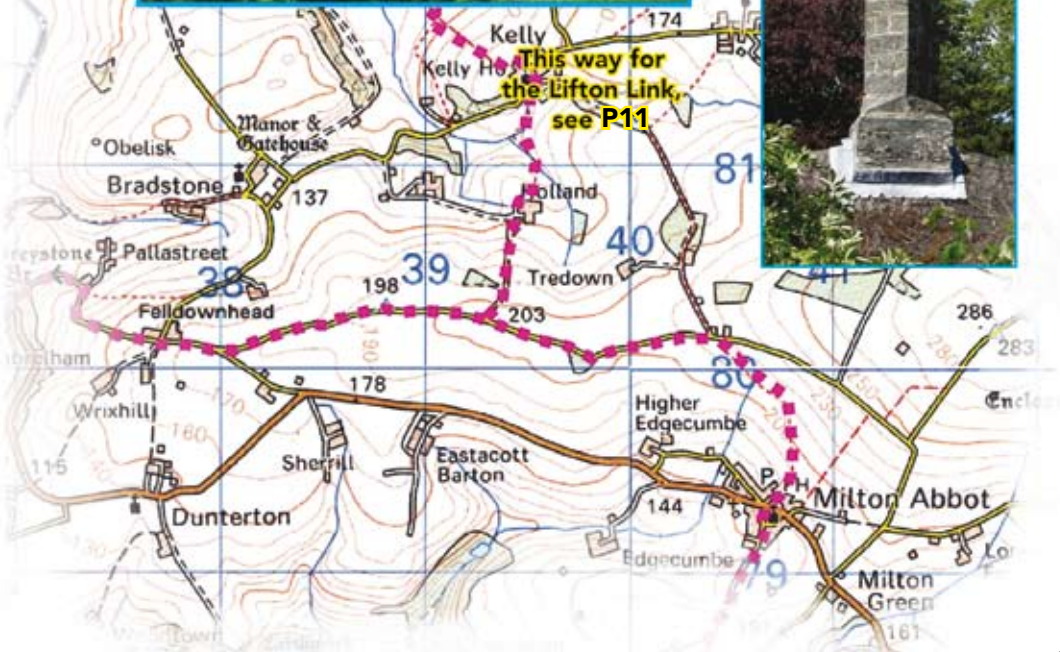
## The Upper Tamar Valley, Milton Abbot to Launceston 9.5 miles / 15.5 km

# 5

When approaching Lawhitton you will see views of Bodmin Moor to the west. About a mile after Lawhitton you will cross the A30, and use a permissive route through St Leonards Riding Centre. You will soon cross the River Kinsey, a Tamar tributary, before reaching your destination, Launceston Castle.



Admire the orchard of Countryman Cider near Felldownhead (left) or the unusual architecture of Endsleigh Lodge



This waymarked walk is mainly off-road using new permissive paths or existing bridle ways, but it also includes some short sections of quiet country roads. The walk is steep and uneven in places and walking boots are recommended.

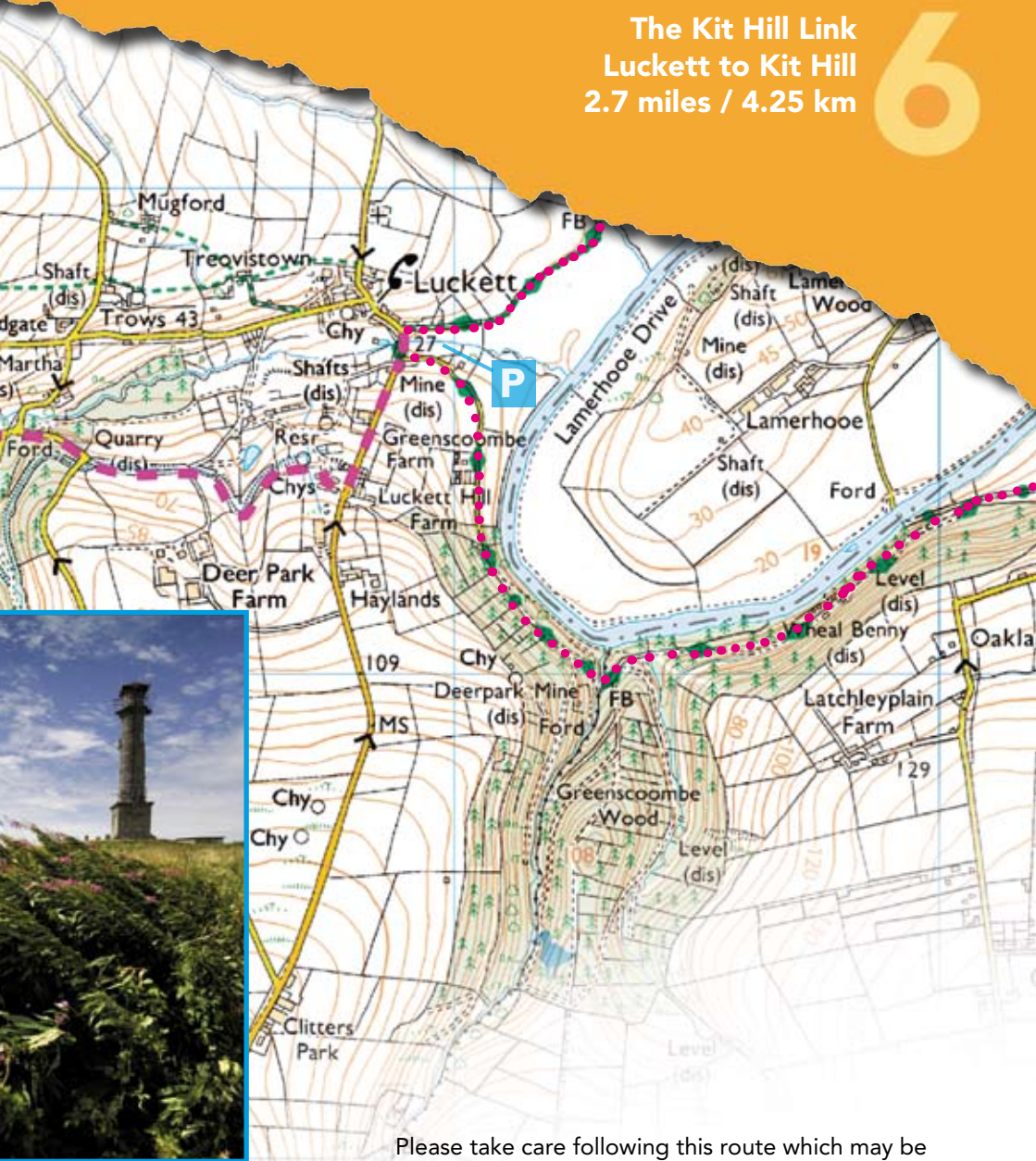
From Lockett car park (SX38927366) walk up Lockett Hill then across the former mineral extraction area of Lockett Mine. After a ladder stile the walk then follows an old leat across Deer Park Farm. After crossing the road ford at New Mill the route follows the riverside track through Sheba Wood to the quiet hamlet of Old Mill before climbing the old bridle way up to Downgate. At Downgate turn left and walk up the road to the busy B3257. Cross with care to the Kit Hill Incline car park.

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# The Kit Hill Link Lockett to Kit Hill 2.7 miles / 4.25 km



ar Valley AONB

Please take care following this route which may be muddy, stony or uneven in places. Please take special care crossing the former mine site. The route has been granted with the help of private landowners. Please respect their privacy and leave gates as you find them.

# Extra Info

## Important Pre-Journey Preparations

The Tamar Valley Discovery Trail follows the courses of two rivers. In order to cross these rivers you will need to be armed with certain bits of information before you head out onto the trail.

There are links below for tide times, and also train, ferry and bus timetables that should help you navigate your way deep into the heart of the Tamar Valley.

We welcome green visitors to the Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

To be a greener visitor, you can follow these steps:

-  If possible, leave your car at home and use public transport – see links below.
-  Take your litter home and recycle it where possible.
-  Do not disturb any livestock, keep your dog under close control and leave gates as you find them.
-  Do not disturb wild animals, birds or flowers.
-  Buy locally produced goods, including food and souvenirs. Support local shops and services. See [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk) for up-to-date listings

## External links

For information on other long-distance recreational routes in Devon and Cornwall:

[www.devon.gov.uk/walking](http://www.devon.gov.uk/walking)  
[www.cornwall.gov.uk](http://www.cornwall.gov.uk)

**Tide times:**

[www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides/](http://www.bbc.co.uk/weather/coast/tides/) (look at times for Saltash or Cotehele Quay in the SW Region)

**National train times:**

[www.thetrainline.com](http://www.thetrainline.com)

**For details about the Tamar Valley Line:**  
[www.greatscenicrailways.com](http://www.greatscenicrailways.com)

**Tourism information:**  
[www.tamarvalleytourism.co.uk](http://www.tamarvalleytourism.co.uk)

**Ferry Farm to Calstock ferry service:**  
For updates on this service please visit  
[www.calstockparishcouncil.org.uk](http://www.calstockparishcouncil.org.uk)

**Local bus times:** [www.traveline.org.uk](http://www.traveline.org.uk)

For additional information regarding the Discovery Trail and the wider Tamar Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, look online at [www.tamarvalley.org.uk](http://www.tamarvalley.org.uk), call 01822 835030, or drop in to the Tamar Valley Centre, Cemetery Road, Drakewalls, Gunnislake, Cornwall, PL18 9FE. The details in this brochure are believed to be correct. Devon County Council will not accept responsibility for losses arising due to inaccuracies or omissions within this publication. Published by Devon County Council, County Hall, Exeter, EX2 4QW. Tel. 01392 382000. ISBN: 1-85522-873-4. Photo credits: Tamar Valley AONB/Jo Pridham, Tamar Valley AONB/Ruth Davies, Ted Giffords.