WHEAL FRIENDSHIP PHONE BOX MUSEUM

MARY TAVY MINING HISTORY GUIDED WALK

MAIN WALK

Facing the Phone Box Museum on Bal Lane ***(///flagging.obtain.props)*** turn towards the main road and the War Memorial. Across the main road, you'll see the Wesleyan Chapel, built in 1835 and used by miners living on both sides of what was then known as Black Down (now the A386).

Cross the main road using the zebra crossing and walk towards the junction with Brentor Road. Look to your right, cross the main road again, and take the public bridleway ***(///relocated.craters.shipyards)***.

Here, you will find a small marker stone on the left (1) ***(///amps.spooked.dose)***. This marks the site of Wheal Hope, a copper mine established in 1795 and taken over by Wheal Friendship the following year.

Continue down this track, pass the wooden hut on the right and after another 40 metres, take the second small path on your right into the woods ***(///courage.acid.incisions)***. This wood was the site of mine workings including several small copper and arsenic mines.

Follow this path through the woods until you see the Coronation Hall, built in 1961. Walk to the left of the Coronation Hall onto the playing fields, then follow the right-hand boundary hedge. Pass the allotments and go through the gate at the far right-hand corner of the field onto the Jubilee Walk (2) ***(///dummy.tarnished.roughness)***.

Disclaimer: *This walk includes areas with old mine workings which are inherently dangerous. Stick to the designated public footpaths at all times. By following the routes outlined in this leaflet, you agree to take full responsibility for your own safety and wellbeing. We accept no liability for accidents, injuries, or any other incidents that may occur.*

/// = what3words reference

On the Jubilee Walk, you can see Gibbet Hill behind you and White Tor in the distance to the right. At the end of the path, go through the garden of the Mary Tavy Inn (formerly The Buller's Arms). The cottage beside the pub on your right used to be a two-room miner's cottage.

NOTE: The Buller's Arms was named after the Buller family who owned most of the land in Mary Tavy until 1891. The pub's name was changed to The Mary Tavy Inn in the early 20th century.

Go through the gate onto the road ***(///meanwhile.silent.possible)***, turn left, and follow the road downhill. Pass the gate to the Old Rectory on your left and spot an old Victorian Post Box on the former Post Office (now Homer Farm). Cross the Cholwell Brook via the road bridge.

Look for the Benchmark on the parapet on the north side of the bridge, halfway along the wall (3). Benchmarks are survey marks established by Ordnance Survey to record height above Ordnance Datum. Another Benchmark can be found on the parish church.

After the bridge, turn right following the sign for the Parish Church ***(///simulations.bikers.unfounded)***.

You are now in the old part of Mary Tavy. The cottage on the left is Kent House, built in the early 19th century as a mine captain's house and is now a Grade II listed building.

Follow the road, which used to be the main road from Tavistock, through Peter Tavy, to Lydford and beyond. Pass the Parish Church and continue until the tarmac ends. Take the left hand lane, passing the hydroelectric power station on your right ***(///distilled.comments.impulses)***. This was built in the mid-1930s using old mining leats to take water from the River Tavy.

NOTE: A leat is a man-made watercourse or channel designed to direct water from a natural source, such as a river or stream. Leats were widely used on Dartmoor and in other parts of the UK during industrial periods, particularly in mining and quarrying operations.

Follow the track until you reach a gate to the River Tavy. Cross the clam bridge (4) (a simple wooden bridge).

Turn immediately left onto the footpath with a marker stone at its entrance, there is a fingerpost To County Road although this is not clearly visible ***(///artichoke.branched.irony)***. Follow the path along the river, and you will see a hole in the hillside on your right which is an old adit (a drainage or ventilation shaft for the mines).

Pass through the gate and cross the stream coming from a second adit on your right.

WARNING: Adits are dangerous; do not enter.

Ahead on the track, you will see the remains of a Pelton Wheel (5) ***(///rice.rope.endearing)***, which was used to drive a dynamo and compressor for the mine workings.

WARNING: There are many hidden dangers in this area. Stay on the path.

Turn around and retrace your steps over the bridge back to the Mary Tavy Parish Church.

From here, you can take two routes:

ROUTE ONE is longer with stiles and is therefore unsuitable for anyone with mobility issues. If you want a shorter, easier route, please follow ROUTE TWO.

ROUTE ONE

Enter the churchyard, walking past the main door into the church.

NOTE: Originally Norman, the church was enlarged in the 15th century.

Follow the path uphill through the churchyard. As you pass a red tomb on your right, look for the tall granite headstone on the left. This headstone belongs to James, the Captain of the Wheal Betsy Mine on Black Down.

NOTE: Wheal Betsy was a lead and silver mine and part of Wheal Friendship until 1837. The remains of the old engine house is now owned by the National Trust. You can find it just off the A386 outside the village boundaries in the Okehampton direction.

Continue up the path and turn left along a grassy path marked 'Public Footpath'. Near the top hedge is another granite headstone, marking the grave of William Crossing, a famous Dartmoor author who once lived in Mary Tavy.

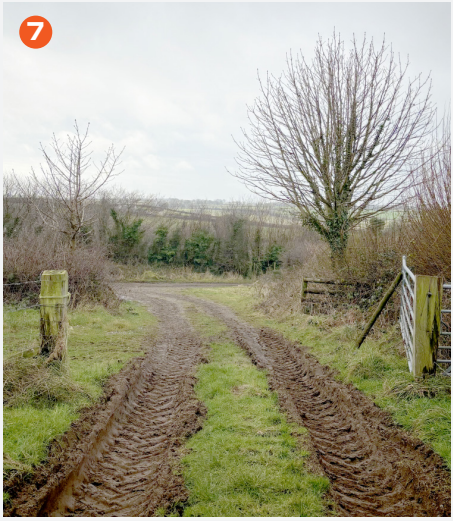
Climb the stone steps and over the stile in the back left of the churchyard into the field beyond ***(///strictest.gets.completed)***.

Follow the left hedge of this field through a gate, then turn left, following the hedge and through another wooden gate, then turn right ***(///dried.shaped.listening)***.

WARNING: There may be livestock in these fields, so please keep dogs on leads and stay on the edges of the fields.

Follow the lane up and over the stile. You will see a ruined building (6), Bennett's Dry, a Grade II listed 19th-century miners' dry where wet clothes were hung up to dry overnight before the next shift ***(///birds.snowboard.hydrant)***.

With Bennetts Dry in front of you, turn left following the 'Public Footpath' sign. To the left of the Dry is a fenced-off area where a mine shaft was. Walk beside the hedge, and tucked away in the corner of the field is a ladder stile ***(///gear.rocks.lectured)***. Climb the stile into the next field. You will be able to see Brent Tor Church in the distance. Head towards the middle gate of the three in front of you (the first metal gate) ***(///shadowed.topples.blaze)***. Go through into the next field, bear left, and head to the gate to the right of the farm building (7).



Go through the gate and follow the track in front of you. Turn right, and after a few yards, go through the gate and turn right onto the road.

Walk uphill for 200 metres, and as the road widens, look for a footpath sign on the left near a metal gate. Take this and climb the steps to the left of the gate and into the woods ***(///changes.tripling.spends)***. Take the left-hand path and continue past the fence to your left.

WARNING: Do not wander off the path. This is a former mining site and there are many hidden mine shafts.

Drop down the hillside following the path across a disused leat which once brought water to work a waterwheel for the mine. Continue along the path until you exit the woods through a gate ***(///rooftop.prank.topples)***.

Head down the fenced path to another gate leading to the road. The visible raised area in the field to the right is the site of another old mine shaft.

At the road, turn right and rejoin the Main Walk.

ROUTE TWO

From the church, carry on back towards the bridge over Cholwell Brook and turn right along the road, passing Mary Tavy and Brentor Primary School. Pass the turning to Horndon, and you will see a footpath coming from the right. Here you rejoin the Main Walk.

MAIN WALK CONTINUED

As the road drops down, each side was once part of Wheal Friendship. Cross over Cholwell Brook and behind Brookside Cottage (an old miner's cottage) once stood two Brunton Calciners where the mundic (arsenic) ore was processed.

NOTE: Mundic was broken into small pieces before being put into a rotating hearth and roasted. The hot gases were taken by long flues to condensing chambers where white crude arsenic was deposited. Boys would scrape it off the wall with only a cloth over their faces for protection.

You can just about see the remains of the calciners if you look up the hill to the right of Brookside House chimney, where the arched domes of the old arsenic condensing chambers are still visible (8).

Walk up the road past Brookside Cottage, the high stone wall on your right is the remains of an aqueduct constructed for the mine.

Continue up Bal Lane until you arrive back at the Phone Box Museum.

NOTE: The word 'bal' is the West Country word for mine, and this lane was used by miners and bal maidens (unmarried female mine labourers) to get to and from work.

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