

TAMAR PASSENGER FERRY



RIVERSIDE HERITAGE

Viaduct

The splendid viaduct was built between 1904-1907 to link the main railway line at Bere Alston with the former East Cornwall Mineral Railway to Kelly Bray. The viaduct is made from concrete! It is a very early example of the use of concrete for such a construction. It is built of 11,000 precast concrete blocks, which were manufactured on site, on the Devon bank. Until 1934 a vertical hoist lifted wagons between the river bank and the viaduct on the Calstock side.



Building Calstock Viaduct c1905

Danescombe

Legend has it that this is the place where the Danes landed in 838 to join the Celtic Britons in their defence against invading Saxons at the battle of Hingston Down. From the river you gain an excellent view of an attractive building which was originally the Ashburton Hotel. This opened to allow Victorian visitors coming to Calstock to avoid having to take tea in the town, which was considered too rough and unsanitary at that time! The valley behind has seen mining activity, followed by market gardening and there are plenty of pleasant walks here.



Danescombe

Calstock

Mentioned in the Domesday Book (1086), Calstock developed greatly during the mining boom of the late 1880's, becoming a flourishing port shipping out copper, tin, arsenic and granite. A return trade in coal, limestone and "dock-dung" (sweepings from the streets of Plymouth), supplied engine houses, limekilns and market gardens.

Calstock has welcomed visitors for many years - paddle steamers began excursions up the Tamar in the 1820's and modern pleasure boats still visit today. A guide to walks from the village is available locally.



Steamer at Calstock c1900

Chapel in the Woods

Between Danescombe and Cotehele you can glimpse the 'Chapel in the Woods' through the trees. Part of Cotehele Estate, it was built by Sir Richard Edgcumbe as a thank-offering for his escape from his pursuers in 1483. You can visit the chapel when walking between Calstock and Cotehele Quay.

Cotehele Quay

Cotehele, owned by the Edgcumbe Family for nearly 600 years, is a fascinating and enchanting place. Now looked after by the National Trust and open to visitors, the estate offers interest all year, including a series of footpaths through verdant woodland valleys.

The house, one of the least-altered mediaeval houses in the country, is built of local slatestone and granite. Inside its unit ancient rooms are famed particularly for their furniture, textiles and tapestries. Attractive formal and informal gardens surround the house.

The Victorian Quay, by the river, evokes memories of 19th Century commerce and industry. Through the woods along the Morden Valley, the 18th Century water mill recalls the agricultural history of this beautiful area.

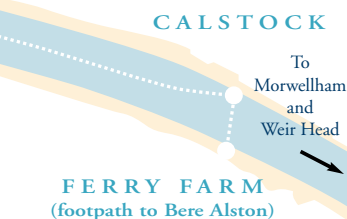
The Shamrock

The Shamrock, a Tamar Sailing Barge built in Plymouth in 1899, worked on the river and along the south coast of Cornwall and Devon. Rescued by the National Trust as a derelict hulk in the early 1970's, she was faithfully restored to her 1926 condition with the help of the National Maritime Museum.

She is berthed at Cotehele as a permanent reminder of the busy trade which the river used to carry. A museum on Cotehele Quay includes displays giving more information about the Shamrock and the river trade.



The Shamrock and Cotehele Quay



Loading granite at Calstock c1902

Ferry Farm

The farm was formerly Mr James' 'Passage Inn', and daytrippers visited the 'pleasure gardens' here. Adjacent to the Inn stood Goss's Shipyard, active from the 1840's until 1923, where many of the distinctive Tamar barges were built. The ferry crossing here is one of the oldest on the Tamar, probably dating back to Saxon times.



The Passage Inn now Ferry Farm



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TAMAR PASSENGER FERRY



RIVERSIDE WILDLIFE

Kingfisher ¹



The Kingfisher is perhaps one of the most spectacular sights you may see along the margins of the estuary. It is a small bird, distinctive by its dazzling blue and red plumage. It is usually seen singly, either darting across the water or perched by the water's edge. As its name suggests, it feeds mostly on small fish plucked from the water. It is found throughout the Tamar estuaries and is most common between the months of March and August. During the winter, Kingfishers migrate from freshwater to estuaries and coastal areas. In some years more Kingfishers are recorded in the Tamar estuary than any other estuary in Britain.



1

Little Egret ²

The Little Egret is an increasingly frequent sight in the estuary. It can be seen all year round, though numbers are usually highest in late summer and autumn. It is a large white bird, similar to a Heron, but smaller, that mainly roosts in trees and feeds on small fish and crustaceans.

The Egret is protected by national and European legislation.



2

Ancient Woodland

Ancient woodland fringes the estuary margins clinging to steep slopes, cliff and rocky outcrops.

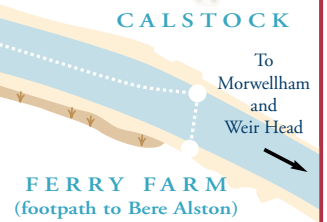
It is home to many species of insects, fungi and lichens. Woodland is characteristic of estuaries in Southwest England and is a very important feature of the Tamar estuary. It provides shelter, and roosting and breeding sites for some birds, such as Little Egrets and Herons.

Common Reed ⁴

The reedbeds in the Tamar estuary are very important within the context of Devon and Cornwall, with over one-third of the two counties' total area of reedbed. The tall Common Reed dominates beds in the upper reaches of the estuary. Associated wetland species include the salt marsh plants: freshwater Bulrush, Iris, Alder and Willow trees. Certain sites within the Tamar have the only remaining British populations of the Triangular Club Rush, a member of the sedge family. Many rare insect species are specifically associated with reedbeds, as well as bird species such as the Cetti's Warbler, Water Rail, Reed Warbler and Reed Bunting.



4



CALSTOCK
To Morwellham and Weir Head
FERRY FARM (footpath to Bere Alston)

Common Sandpiper ³

The Common Sandpiper is a wading bird, usually seen singly or in small groups. It is a relatively scarce visitor to the Tamar, but it is most likely to be seen between July and August. It spends most of its time along rocky foreshores and estuaries feeding on invertebrates. Although it does not currently reach nationally-important numbers in the Tamar, the numbers present do represent approximately ten percent of the overwintering population in Britain.



3

Salmon ⁵

The Atlantic Salmon is a relatively large fish that can exceed one metre in length and weigh over twenty kilograms. The Salmon must pass through the estuaries on their upstream migration to spawn in the freshwater reaches. The juvenile fish (parr and smolts) spend the first two years of their life in fast-flowing streams before migrating out to sea. Adults spend their time feeding at sea before returning to their home river to spawn. Prior to their spawning run, Salmon gather in the lower estuaries waiting for spate conditions when there is enough water in the river for the adults to reach their spawning beds. There is a licensed net fishery for Salmon in the upper reaches of the estuary. A technique called 'seine netting' is used - nets are rowed out from the shore in a large semi-circular shape.



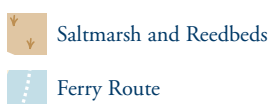
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Otter ⁶

The Otter is a semi-aquatic carnivore that is distributed in many areas throughout the estuaries. It lives in a variety of habitats including lakes, rivers, stream marshes and coastal areas, and feeds on fish, amphibians, birds and mammals. The Westcountry is believed to be a stronghold for Otters. Since a decline in the 1950's-1970's, evidence of individuals and family groups suggests that numbers are increasing. The number of Otters in the Tamar estuary is difficult to determine as they are rarely sighted, though their droppings (spraint) and tracks are more commonly encountered.



6



To Halton Quay and Plymouth