



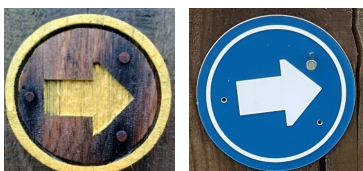
Walk the South Hooe Cottage farmland nature trail on the Bere Peninsula

Enjoy 1-2 hours of peace and tranquillity on this 2-mile stroll, sit and take in the splendid river views and spot some local wildlife. For a longer walk you can start at Weir Quay and arrive through Hanger Wood. Bring your binoculars!

Open from dawn to dusk on the first Saturday of each month. Unfortunately, there are no dogs allowed on this permissive path due to wading birds. Please leave gates exactly as you find them. There are no facilities at the site.

Start: What 3 words? fractions.stint.tinted. Grid Ref: SX 42091 65439

The walk starts at South Hooe Cottage with the route marked by arrows and numbered wooden discs. See 1-14 points of interest below. When diversions are in place, please follow the specific signs.



1. From South Hooe Cottage, continue along track until green lane. Admire hedge-laying done by Tavistock Taskforce. Follow arrow to the right, down green lane. Note spring flowers - primroses, stitchwort, red campion, bluebells, daffodils.
2. Continue through field gate with cherry orchard on your right (local Tamar Valley varieties of cherry planted over 20 years ago). View across to Cornish bank of the river Tamar, see the lime kilns along the shore. You are likely to hear and see buzzards hunting.



Goldcrest

3. Take the pedestrian gate leaving willow plantation on your right (early flowers attract insects). You can see the apple orchard (local Tamar varieties, very valuable for wildlife), beyond this the broadleaved plantation (both planted 20 years ago). Large oak and moribund ash along the marsh edge and overgrown ponds are noteworthy.

The reedbeds are a good place to hear Cetti's warbler throughout the year, reed warblers in summer and lapwing in winter. At dusk, flocks of overwintering starlings fly into reeds to roost. Continue up towards wildlife tower - please do not disturb as it is hoped to attract nesting barn owls or kestrels and bats to this roost.

On your right, an overgrown Christmas tree plantation is a good place to spot goldcrests and coal tits and hear great spotted woodpecker. Leave tower on your left and walk through the gap in the hedge.

4. Bench with a view (made by local woodworker Andy Morton from a eucalyptus which came down in the garden). You can look across to Halton Quay* and down river towards Pentillie Estate. In the gorse: long-tailed tits, blue tits, great tits, chiff chaff, black caps. Below, at high tide, little egret, mallard, teal, grey heron, Canada geese, shelduck.
5. Viewpoint over the peninsula looking downstream towards Weir Quay. On your right, a beautiful old oak, the native tree that supports the most species of invertebrates. Barn owl box installed to allow for male and female to have separate accommodation and to provide safe roosts for fledged young. Walk on down through the new plantation taking care to avoid twisting your ankle in rabbit or badger holes.
6. Rough grass area to provide tussocks to encourage voles as food for barn owls. To your right, views over the saltmarsh and across to Pentillie boathouse and the Repton designed landscape. Signs of otters found along the edge of the marsh.

* **Halton Quay:** The small white building (now St Indract's Chapel) was the clerk of works office. Farmers came with carts to collect the lime from the kilns - the first to arrive put their horseshoe on a stick and was the first to get the best early lime from the kiln. Upstream is the Holy Well of St Indract who landed here is 689 AD. The river had a boat crossing to North Hooe until the 1920s, prior to which pilgrims crossed at low tide on their way to the Isles of Scilly.



Barn owl

7. From here you can look through the gate on your right onto the marsh and see the breach in the sea wall made by the Environment Agency - allowing tidal inundation of this land. Walk through the gate and into the recently created wildflower meadow. In spring you can spot the hay rattle which is used to suppress the grass and encourage smaller wildflower species. The thistles attract butterflies: meadow brown, gatekeeper, small skipper, small tortoiseshell, peacock, red admiral, orange tip, large cabbage white and, if you are lucky, marbled white. Skylark nest in the grass and can be heard singing over this field in spring.
8. The bird hide provides views over the new freshwater ponds (teal and mallard likely to be seen) and the reinstated intertidal area. Often stonechats and meadow pipits are here. You may see hovering kestrel or even marsh harrier quartering along the sea wall. Buzzard perch on the fenceposts. At high tides little egrets and common sandpipers may feed along the shore.
9. On your left, note the recently planted native hedge which follows the line of hedge shown on a 1740 map. In summer, dragonflies often fly along the hedgerow - emperor and broad bodied chaser are common. You will need to go through the gate quietly to avoid disturbing the wetland birds. Linnets often seen here. Note barn owl box in old ash tree.
10. Another area of rough grass for the barn owls. If you walk quietly behind the hedge, you may spot shoveler, teal, wigeon, mallard or even greenshank on the ponds.
11. Approach the gateway quietly to see waterfowl and waders (snipe, redshank) on the flooded grassland to your right. The grassland to the left is sometime used by lapwing and golden plover. The small barn on the left was probably used for daffodil picking, it offers shelter to barn owls and stock doves.



Hay rattle



Marbled white



Reed warbler

12. Beyond the second gate you can turn immediately right to a bird-watching hide for views of the estuary and the new wetlands. Return the way you came to the main track.
Note: at very high tides, the hide may be closed.

Continue along track, with a further pond hidden in the reeds. During the breeding season, reed warbler, sedge warbler and Cetti's warbler may be singing, with swallows and martins feeding on insects. Many small fish live here, and kingfisher may also be spotted, along with grey heron, mallard and teal. Two otters caught on camera here and 12 species of bat recorded flying past, including Daubenton's bat which hunts over water. Fleabane, tansy and wild carrot are found along the verge.

TURN LEFT up a stony track, with newly planted hedge-bank on the left. Spot sown wildflowers including foxglove, yarrow, knapweed, and along the hedge on your right, a relic of the past - the Ploughman's spikenard.

13. From this point you can turn back and look upstream. At low tide you will see mud exposed, enjoyed by black-headed gulls, shelduck, redshank, curlew and, about 2 hours each side of high tide, a few avocets. You can rest on a bench here.
14. A 360-degree viewpoint of the peninsula. Continue along track, you may see goldfinches and in winter redwings and fieldfares. Turn right back down the green lane, past South Hooe Cottage and uphill to parking area.



Avocet

Directions and car-parking

For parking: What 3 words? Clogging.jazz.trains. Grid Ref: SX 42493 65688

With Sat Nav: follow to Hewton (PL20 7BW). As you approach Hewton House and Hewton Farmhouse, turn right on the corner so that Hewton House is on your left and Hewton Farmhouse is on your right. Continue to T junction, turn left. Just before the road forks (North Hooe to the right and South Hooe to the left) you will see a car park with double gates on the right.

Without Sat Nav: Approaching Bere Alston after 30 mph sign take a left and follow signs to Hewton. Go straight over the crossroads, left at next junction bypassing housing estate on right, left at T junction and follow road for a mile or so (don't drive down drive with dead-end sign on the sharp left bend) until you see right turn signed to Hooe. Turn right here (often a flood along this stretch), drive straight on (ignoring the left turn). Just before the road forks (North Hooe to the right and South Hooe to the left) you will see a car park with double gates on the right.

From the parking area walk down road used as a public path leaving the vineyard on your left and at the bottom fork left to South Hooe Cottage. Here, you will pick up the arrows for the route.

We hope you enjoy your walk. If you'd like to contribute to biological records of the area do send photos of wildlife you spot to jimandprubarnes@gmail.com or load directly onto iNaturalist App.

nationalgrid

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Illustrations - Phil Collins ©

For more details
on South Hooe
scan:

