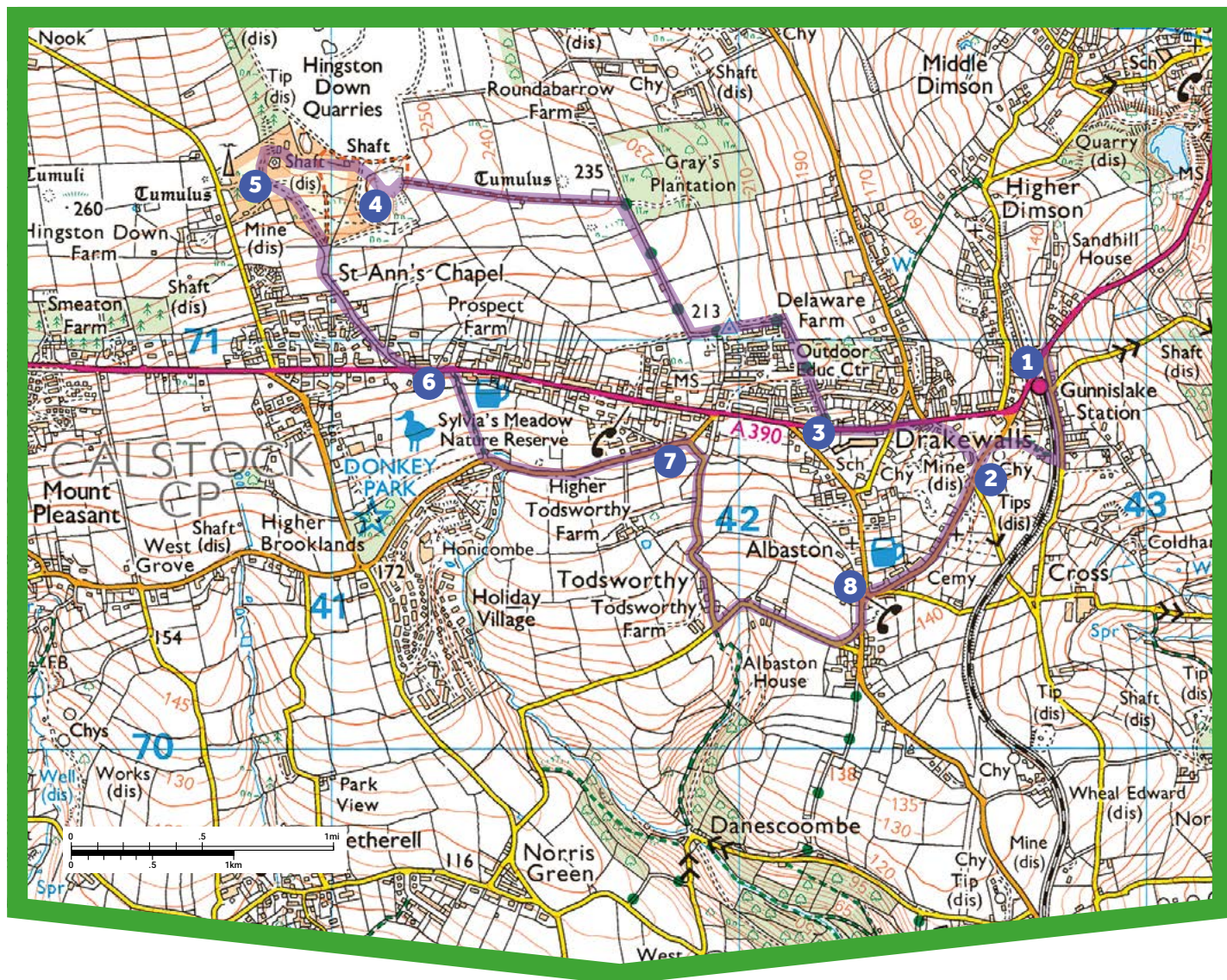




Hingston Down & Albaston

A gentle amble along tracks and paths to Hingston Down – with glorious views south to Plymouth Sound, and the remnants of Hingston Down Mine to explore – with a return via quiet lanes.



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Elevation Profile



Hingston Down & Albaston

Start/finish	Gunnislake Station SX 427709, PL18 9DT
Distance	3¾ miles (6km)
Time	2 hours
Terrain	Hedged tracks and paths, heathland, quiet undulating lanes
Toilets	None on route
Difficulty Rating	Easy
Parking	Laneside in Well Park Road
Public Transport	Rail services Tamar Valley Line to/from Plymouth; bus services to/from Callington and Tavistock

Dogs	Under control at all times
Map	OS Explorer 108 Lower Tamar Valley & Plymouth; OS Landranger 201 Plymouth & Launceston
Note	Hingston Down has open access status and is criss-crossed with path and tracks; keep a close eye on route directions. On the approach to the site the walkable route does not follow the permissive path marked on the Explorer map.

Hingston Down – site of a battle between the Cornish and Saxons in AD838 – is a ‘boss’ on the granite batholith that underlies much of Devon and Cornwall. Hingston Down Mine was worked from at least the 17th century; by 1882 more than 64,000 tons of copper ore had been transported to Calstock Quay for onward shipment to South Wales for smelting. The map by the engine house details the extent of the original site, now largely concealed by scrubby vegetation.

Hingston Down was also home to the Phoenix Brickworks, employing 400 men in the 1870s, and which provided the bricks for St Petersburg dockyard in Russia. The buildings were demolished in 1968.

The Route

1 SX 427709 From the station entrance turn right, then right again onto Well Park Road. After 200 yards turn right under the railway bridge. Where the track bears left, bear right on narrow tarmac path that winds uphill to meet Cemetery Road.

Turn left to reach the remnants of Drakewalls Mine, once the richest tin mine in Cornwall; by the early 19th century it was producing so much tin that it had its own smelter. The first recorded mention of the settlement of Drakewalls – named after the mine – dates from 1815. The Tamar Valley Centre, home to the Tamar Valley AONB offices and a zero-carbon building which generates its own electricity, can be seen ahead.

2 SX 425707 Just before reaching the gate giving access to the mine site, turn right up a narrow lane that ascends to the A390. Cross with care; turn left along the pavement, soon crossing Delaware Road.

3 SX 422707 Immediately past ‘River View’ – the St Ann’s Chapel village sign is about 100 yards ahead, and there’s a blue seat on the other side of the A390 – turn right up an unsigned ascending

track, with increasingly good views to Dartmoor over field gates on the right. The track levels and turns 90 degrees left, then 90 degrees right. Ascend gently past Roundbarrow Cottage; the track levels again on the edge of Gray’s Plantation. At the entrance to Roundbarrow Farm (cottage and farm names here reflect the presence of a nearby burial mound) follow the track sharp left. Where the track heads into a field follow the narrow hedgebanked path ahead. Ignore a small path right and soon ascend a short flight of steps into a tangle of gorse and brambles, willow and birch (crossing a filled-in quarry). The landscape opens up as a T-junction of grassy paths is met.

4 SX 411713 Turn right, uphill, to reach the edge of Hingston Down Quarries. Pass a large boulder and continue along a narrow path; Hitchen’s Shaft (out of sight) is over to the right, and there are lovely views south towards Plymouth Sound. Pass another boulder to emerge into a broad, open area, flanked by the heather-covered spoil heaps of Hingston Down Mine; Bailey’s Shaft engine house can be seen to the right.

A few paces later, turn right on a narrow path; at the next fork bear right to reach the engine house and an excellent information board. In more recent times the mine hit the headlines for the first noted world occurrence of Arthurite, a rare apple-green-coloured copper mineral, recorded here in 1964.

Turn around; follow the narrow path that bears right, passing between the engine house, boiler house and Bailey’s Shaft (out of sight), to meet a track (there’s a metal gate away to the right). Turn left to reach the edge of the open area.

5 SX 408713 Bear right on a broad downhill track across the gorse- and heather-covered slopes of the down, ignoring a path left. At the bottom of the heathland pass around a gate and continue downhill to reach the A390 in St Ann’s Chapel. Cross with care and turn left along the pavement.

6 SX 412709 Immediately before reaching The Rifle Volunteer PH (thought to have been a mine captain’s house, converted to a coaching inn during the 19th century) turn right on a deeply



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Scan for an interactive map and directions



Hingston Down & Albaston

banked footpath signed to Honicombe. After descending steps keep straight on between old walls, passing through fields and beneath lovely beech trees, and alongside a stream at the bottom. On reaching the road cross over and turn left (no pavement after the first few steps), soon passing the playground and later the drive to Higher Todsworth Farm (right). The road narrows; cross over to pick up a dedicated pedestrian path.

7 SX 418707 Turn right down a narrow lane. Descend past impressive stone walls and through the tucked-away little hamlet of Todsworth, to meet a T-junction (opposite a footpath to

Danescombe). Turn left; follow the lane downhill, then ascend between high stone walls and on into Albaston. Bear left at a junction (no entry lane ahead), following signs to Gunnislake. At the next road cross over and turn left.

8 SX 423703 Turn first right by the Queen's Head, eventually passing Albaston Cemetery (home to Calstock Parish Archive): there are places to sit, interesting memorials and wonderful views over the Tamar Valley. Pass the Tamar Valley Centre and Drakewalls Mine. Turn right down Glendorgal Park to pick up the footpath to Well Park Road; turn left, then left again for the station.



A hedged track leads from the A390 to Hingston Down



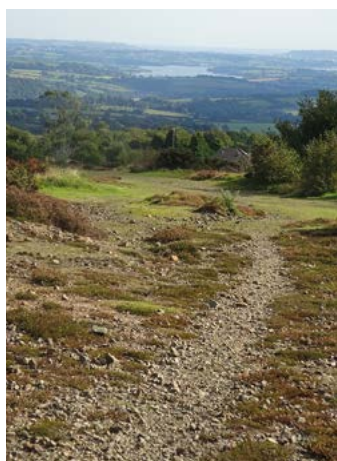
Far-reaching views south towards the Tamar Estuary and Plymouth Sound



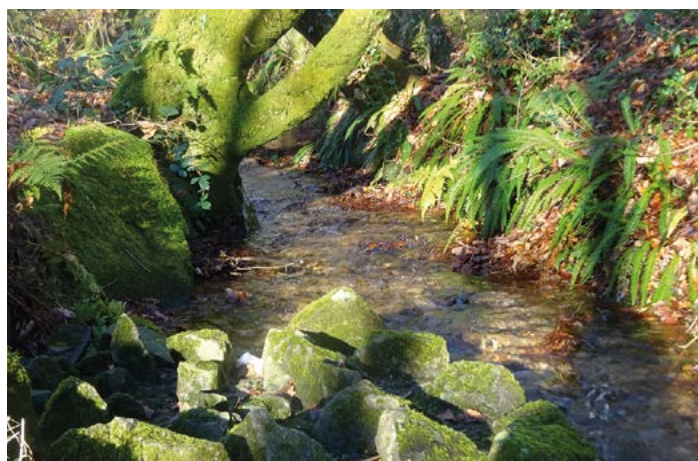
A boulder marks the path along the edge of Hingston Down Quarries



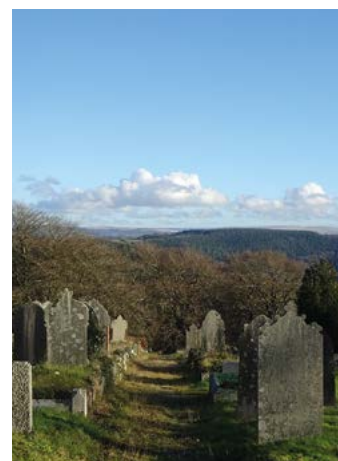
Bailey's Shaft engine house, Hingston Down Mine



Head downhill across the heathland towards St Ann's Chapel



A pretty stream is encountered at the end of the path to Honicombe



A lovely view towards Dartmoor's southwestern hills from Albaston Cemetery

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