

NOTES

Devonport Leat

Commenced in 1793 to supply water to Devonport and the dockyard, it begins high on the moor from the West Dart River. Between its source and Burrator, where it now ends, it includes a tunnel some 650 yards long and a spectacular waterfall leading into an aqueduct over the River Meavy.

Leather Tor Farm

This is one of the many farms in the watershed of the reservoir that was bought by Plymouth Corporation in 1917 so as to preserve the purity of the water discharging into it when its level was raised in 1928. Only one farmhouse was lost when the first stage of the dam was built in 1898. Its walls are now in a very dangerous condition. **Do not** climb on them.

Potato Cave

This cave was excavated in soft, decomposed granite, by the farmer to store root crops. There are several of these man-made caves in the area. Some were used as tool stores by the tinnerns.

Stanlake Farm

Another farm abandoned after purchase by Plymouth Corporation in 1917.

The site is likely to have been occupied as a farm earlier than the 15th century.

WILDLIFE

Damselflies

Seen from June to August, they flutter rather than dart like the larger Dragonflies. In flight their slender bodies glint like metal. They feed on other insects, caught either in flight or picked off plants.



Brown Trout

Look out for small trout darting along the gravelly bed of the leat. Adult Brown Trout swim up from the larger rivers to the shallower, faster flowing rivers such as the Meavy and the heart of the Moor to spawn.

Trees and plants

Although most of the trees seen on the walk consists of the commercially-attractive conifers there is also a mix of broadleaved trees. Visually, this combination softens the outline of the plantations and adds to the seasonal appeal. Wildlife also flourishes in this hospitable environment.

Birds

Amongst the trees are Jay, Tree-creeper, Nuthatch, Blue Tit, Great Tit, Coal Tit and, occasionally, Long-tailed Tit and perhaps Goldcrest.



Walking alongside the River Meavy watch for Dipper and Grey Wagtail.

As you walk down to Norsworthy Bridge you are likely to hear the rapid cackling laugh of the Green Woodpecker.

Roe Deer

The Roe Deer is becoming more numerous in the wooded areas around the edge of the Moor. If you are lucky you may see their white hindquarters as they run away.



WALK No. 5

NORSWORTHY BRIDGE AND LEATHER TOR BRIDGE



Distance 2 miles (3 km)
Time 1 hour

(Short version 1 ½ miles (2 km) and 40 mins)

Description A walk through woods alongside the Devonport Leat and the River Meavy. An ideal shady walk on a hot summer's day. A shortcut is available if you would rather spend more time watching trout and damselflies than walking.

Both walks pass abandoned moorland farmsteads.

Difficulties Straightforward. The full route involves negotiating 4 stiles and crossing the Meavy at a ford. You will also meet 4 stiles on the shorter walk.

Toilets, refreshments An ice-cream van may sometimes be found during the summer months at the start of the walk.

Start point Car parking area at Norsworthy Bridge – end of Burrator Reservoir.



Walk Directions

Cross over the River Meavy by Norsworthy Bridge and go over the stile immediately on the right (signposted "Public footpath. **Devonport Leat**"). Follow the path as it climbs through the trees towards Leather Tor. Climb the stile, cross over the lane and continue ahead uphill on a narrow path alongside a wall. Bear right when you reach the forest track which within a few yards runs alongside the leat.

Follow the leat upstream over a stile and into the woods.

Short Cut

400 yards or so after the stile, opposite a small bridge crossing the leat and just before the cleared area of the wood, a track goes downhill to your right. This is signposted "Public Footpath. **Leather Tor Farm**". Follow the track downhill through the trees until you reach a gate and stile next to the remains of the farm. Cross the stile and turn left down the lane. Notice the **potato cave** in the bank on the left-hand side of the lane some 25 yards after the farm.

Cross the River Meavy over the old bridge and turn right down the forestry track. The track runs alongside the river back to your starting point at Norsworthy Bridge.

Full Walk

Walk along the path by the leat until you reach a stile where the leat enters the wood from the open moor. Cross the stile, turn right and follow the fence down to the river. The ruined buildings here are the remains of **Stanlake Farm**.

Cross the river at the ford if it is safe to do so (See Safety Note below). Then turn right down the track that follows the river all the way back to Norsworthy Bridge and your starting point.

Safety Note

Exercise caution when crossing the river. If you are in any doubt, retrace your steps along the leat and walk back to your starting point using the Short Cut described above.