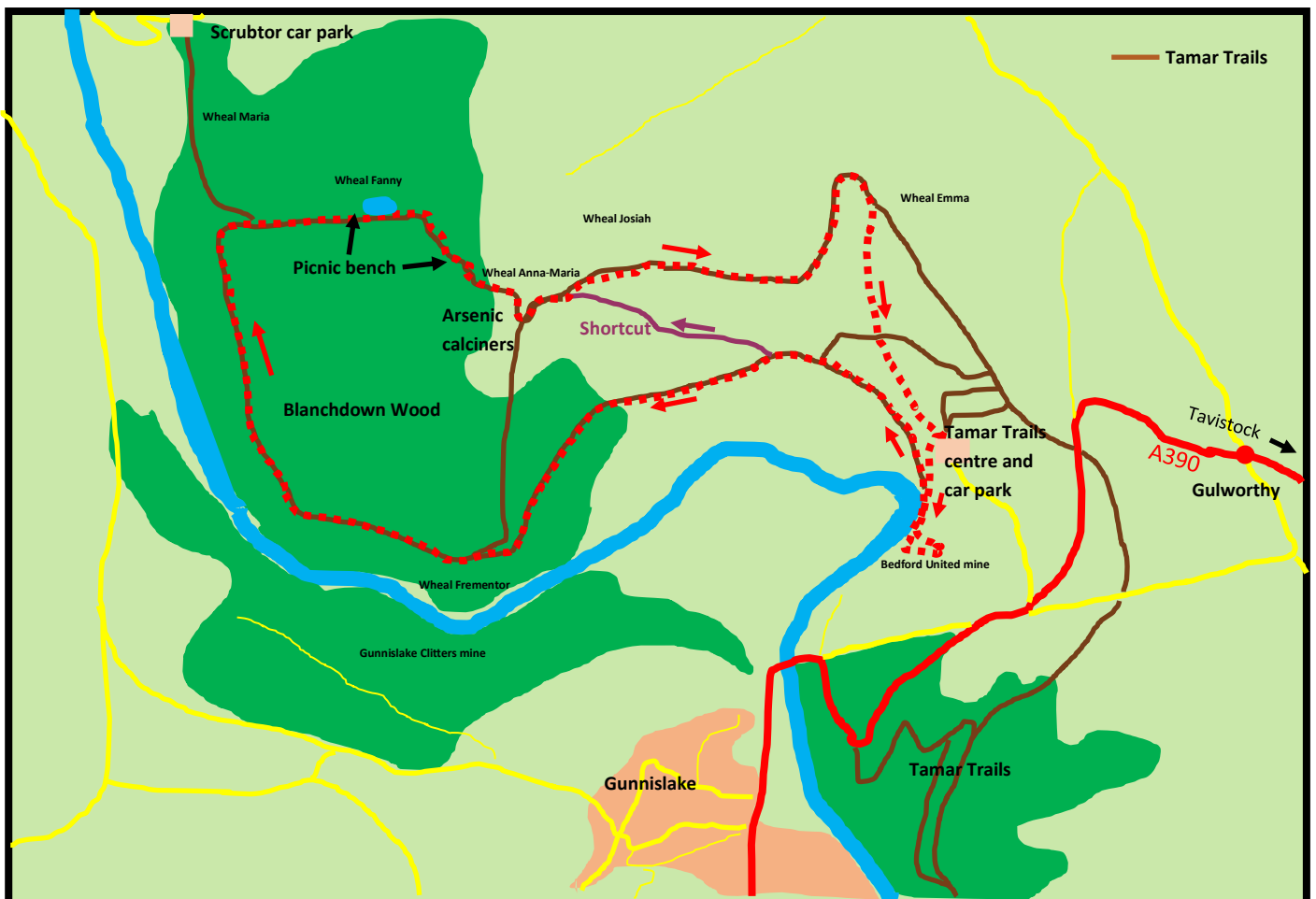


## Walk 7 Devon Great Consoles

From the industrial archaeological point of view DGC is a modern mine. Wheal Maria in Blanchdown Woods first came into full production in 1844 but it was the start of nearly 60 years of industrial rape of a once favoured wood for hunting and rearing of pheasants. By the late 19th Century the hill side would have been all but denuded of trees to make way for mine shafts spoil heaps water ways forges steam engines boiler rooms and chimneys belching smoke. However the Duke of Bedford estate benefited hugely from the royalties negotiated and so did Tavistock. So rich was the deposit of Copper bearing ore at Wheal Maria that in just the first year after commencing operations some 13000 tons of ore was brought to the surface realizing £16000 which was a lot of money 170 years ago. The walk starts by going through Bedford United Mine the workings of which started about 5 years before DGC. A mine that produced copper tin iron and arsenic as well as uranium and wolfram . This mine lasted a bit longer finally giving up in 1925 22 years more than DGC.





This 5.5 mile walk starts at the Tamar Trails Centre PL19 8JE or SX 438728 and if it is open pick up a free trail map from there before you set off. The map has a lot of historical information which adds to the interest of this walk and takes you through what was once a very industrial area. There is large pay and display car park at the Tamar Trails centre and as the walk will take at least 2 hours you will need to pay for an all-day ticket (presently £2.40). The first section of the walk is a little bit challenging as there are lots of steep steps down to the mine but it's quite safe. There is a shortcut that misses out Blanchdown wood and Wheal Fanny that will take about 2 miles off the walk but still seeing the calciners and Bedford United mine.



Setting off from the Tamar Trails car park go past the notice board and shelter and turn immediately left to follow the Bedford United Trail which just to reiterate has lots of steps. Look out for and follow the post with arrows on a white background. Its all well signposted you just have to look for them.





Possibly the steepest part is the first few hundred meters which zig-zags straight down hill but there are steps nearly all the way some of which are on the large side.

The path does go past some well preserved mine workings.



The woodland path eventually (minimum half an hour walk ) meets a wide vehicle track which many people use but it is actually a private road. Turn right and following the Bedford United trail signs go back up the hill through the wood. At the top you will meet a cross roads of paths here turn left and walk back down the hill to meet with the other end of the private road.





At the bottom of the hill when you rejoin the private road go through a gate and stay on the wide track.

If you have a Tamar Trails map you will see that you have now joined the Wheal Josiah Trail which is coloured grey.

**Shortcut Walk** When you reach a fork of equal sized tracks Fork right sign-posted to Devon Great Consoles and pick up the walk again at the information building.



For the long walk keep left sign-posted to Wheal Frementor.

You will soon start to walk through an area used by mountain bikers who may cross the track you are on at speed so keep a look out.

Leaving the mountain bike area

you arrive at a sharp right hand hairpin bend here go straight on staying next to the fence. There is a bench on your right a bit further along.

After about 2km you arrive at this T junction. Turn right and follow the signs to Wheal Anna Maria passing some ponds on your left.







*On your left you will pass a track next to a pond. Its not the way we want to go but it does lead to a picnic bench that overlooks the water. If it has been very wet the path to the benches may be flooded but there are more benches a little further on.*

If you have paused for refreshments return to the track and go on a bit further until you see a “No Public Access” sign. Fork right up the short hill passing some more slightly impractical picnic benches.



At the T junction signposted left to the disabled parking area turn right and follow the signs to DGC Arsenic works.

On reaching a wide dusty track turn right signposted to Blanch-down Woods but only go for about 30m and then turn left through a pedestrian gate into the Wheel Anna Maria Calciner Complex.







Walk on through the complex and on the other side go through another pedestrian gate and turn right. The wide track leads down hill and forks left and right. Just as you reach the fork there is a roofless information building on your left with lots of information on display boards which is well worth visiting.

At the fork go left to follow the sign to Bedford sawmills car park via Wheel Emma.



**Shortcut Walk** *If you are on the shortcut walk you will come up the hill to this junction. Go and have a look at the information building and the arsenic calciners and then come back here and fork left to follow the long walk route instructions and the yellow arrow on the photo above.*





Soon after walking around a tight bend you will arrive at this fence line. At the end of it fork right signposted Footpath to Sawmills Car park which has initially a steep down hill gradient Be aware that Bedford Sawmills, Sawmills and Tamar Trails Centre are all the same place.

About 300m along this woodland track you arrive at a T junction whatever you do, do not go straight across as it's a very steep path that drops down to the Bedford United path you were walking on 2 hours ago. Here turn left and look out for signs to the car park and Tamar Centre.



A little way along fork right. The sign is somewhat hidden by trees.

Passing the tree surfers on your left and right you will soon arrive back at the car park and the Tamar Trails centre which if it is open does sell coffee tea and cake.

