

# Yarner Wood Nature Trail

The Yarner Wood Nature Trail is split into two main sections: a short easy circular walk of 2½ kilometres (1½ miles) and a longer, more strenuous circular walk of 3¾ kilometres (2 miles). Each trail has shortcuts back to the car park. Combining the two trails makes a circular walk of approximately 6 kilometres (3½ miles).

Follow the waymarked arrows from the bottom corner of the car park and look out for the numbered information points along the way.

PLEASE HELP US TO PROTECT WILDLIFE BY KEEPING YOUR DOGS ON A LEAD. YARNER WOOD CAR PARK IS CLOSED AT 7 P.M. (or dusk if earlier) IN THE EVENING AND OPENS AT 8.30 AM IN THE MORNING. ACCESS ON FOOT FROM CAR PARKS ON TRENDLEBERE DOWN IS POSSIBLE AT ALL TIMES.

PARTIES OF TEN OR MORE PEOPLE WISHING TO USE THE YARNER WOOD CAR PARK MUST BOOK IN ADVANCE WITH THE SITE MANAGER.

## Nature Trail Short Loop

**1** Looking back towards the woodland you will notice how the wood is set in a steep sided valley which descends from the high moorland to the farmland below. You are standing in an area of heathland where the dominant plants are heather, gorse and bracken. Heathland is an important habitat for many insect and bird species, including butterflies like the grayling and birds such as the linnet and stonechat. Listen for the stonechat's characteristic call which sounds like two stones being knocked together.

The nearby shed is an air pollution monitoring station.

**2** Heathland is kept open by regular burning or 'swaling'. This promotes healthy growth of heather and gorse. If swaling was not carried out, areas of heathland like this would become woodland. The fenced area located on your right just before you re-enter the woodland is grazed by ponies in summer. In autumn the ponies are put back onto the fields at Reddaford Down.

**3** This open area is mown each year to provide sunny habitats for butterflies such as speckled wood, meadow brown and silver washed fritillary. Sunlit banks also encourage red wood ants to build their nests. There are about 800 nests in Yarner Wood – home to about 20 million ants!

**4** The trunks of many trees are covered in a green carpet of mosses and lichens. These plants grow well here due to the high rainfall and clean air. The birch woodland is gradually becoming dominated by oak – unlike birch, oak is slow growing but lives much longer. Hazel and the honeysuckle festooning the trees provide an ideal habitat for the nationally rare dormouse.

**5** In this area thickets of holly and a ground layer of bilberry grow in the shade of large oak trees. Nest boxes are used by pied flycatchers, which can be seen on the reserve from mid-April to June. Some return to the same box each year after their winter migration to West Africa.

**The nature trail splits here. Take the left path (waymarked in green) to continue on the shorter trail back to the car park (½ mile maximum), or follow the blue arrows for the longer trail (2 miles maximum).**

**6** You are standing in the former bed of the Bovey Tracey Pottery Leat which was constructed in about 1850. It carried water 8 kilometres (5 miles) from Becky Falls to the Pottery at Bovey Tracey.

Looking around you may notice a number of fallen trees and rotten standing trunks. These are deliberately left alone and provide a valuable habitat for insects, lichens, fungi, birds, and even bats.

**7** The large beech trees here are over 150 years old and were planted as an ornamental feature in the Nineteenth Century.

**8** Here, near the stream and stew pond, the soil is too wet for oak and bilberry. Birch does not mind wet conditions and is the dominant tree, along with alder, which only grows in wet places.

## Nature Trail Long Loop

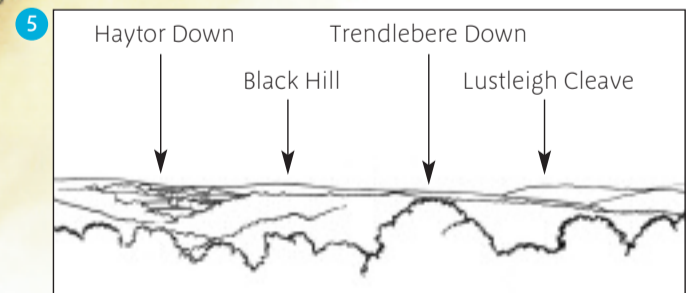
**1** Why do you think this area, called Pine Tree Ride, is mown? This part of the wood was coppiced until the early 1900's and then abandoned. This has resulted in dense growth of multi-stemmed trees. Bilberry is the dominant plant under the dense shade whilst heather grows prolifically on the ride and in the woodland edges. Widening of the ride and mowing help to maintaining open ground that is used by butterflies and other insects.

**2** People have influenced every part of Yarner Wood. Planted beech trees were felled in this area in 1987/8 and the open sunlit conditions have now encouraged heather to grow in a dense carpet. What will happen when the young oaks have grown taller?

**3** Small scale tree felling, known as selective thinning, helps flowering plants such as violets, which benefit from the additional light reaching the woodland floor. Violets are the food plant of the pearl bordered fritillary butterfly which can be seen here in early to mid-May.

**4** The ruins among the trees below you are the remains of a copper mine known as the Yarrow Mine or Devon Wheal Francis. In 1862 the mine was 300 feet deep and employed 50 people, and by 1865 it had produced 2,300 tons of copper ore.

**DANGER! PLEASE DO NOT ATTEMPT TO GO BEYOND THE FENCE AS THE AREA IS LIABLE TO COLLAPSE.**



Viewpoint looking Northwards across Yarner Wood

**6** This is a section of the Haytor Granite Tramway built in 1820. It ran just over 11 kilometres (7 miles) from the Haytor granite quarries to Teigngrace, and blocks of granite were carried on flat, horse-drawn trucks. In its heyday Haytor granite was shipped out of Devon by sea and was even used in the construction of the old London Bridge.

**7** This area was planted with conifers such as Scots pine and larch in 1868. These mature conifers now provide perfect nesting sites for ravens and birds of prey, such as buzzards and sparrowhawks.

**8** Below you is part of the Bovey Tracey Pottery Leat. This took water from Becky Falls, across Trendlebere Down and through Yarner Wood where it picked up extra water from the Woodcock and Yarner streams en-route to Bovey. The Pottery closed down and part of the leat was abandoned in the 1950's, but this section is still used.

Stonechat. Mike Read

