

walk 4

Devoran

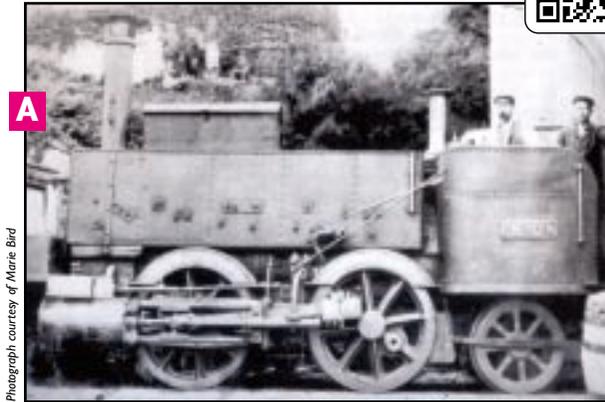
A railway, a port and a new town

compiled by Phil Allen

Route: Devoran Village Hall Quay Road, Devoran Quay, Old Tram Road, Tallacks Creek, Higher Devoran, Carnon Downs Smithy Lane, Wellington Place, Mid Devoran, Belmont, Market Street. The walk is generally along wide paths with reasonably good surface or quiet roadways. The route contains a short steep hill section and is between 1.5 and 2 hours long.

The walk starts at the entrance to Devoran Village Hall **A** where you will notice a splendid account of Devoran's industrial history. The route of the old railway tracks can be gauged from the line of granite posts beside the road. With your back to the hall follow them by turning left along Quay Road.

The Redruth to Chasewater Railway, lifeblood of the Gwennap mines in their heyday.



Photograph courtesy of Marie Bird

Photograph courtesy of the RIC

As the housing on your right gives way to the open quay, take the footpath marked Devoran Quay, passing between two splendid Monterey pines. The full route around Devoran Quay is not passable at high tide, so you may have to retrace your steps back to this point if the tide covers the path at Narabo inlet.

Follow the shoreline past the old mineral ore hutches, which are now put to good use storing dinghies and kayaks. A model showing how the ore was pitched into the hutches from above may be seen at the National Maritime Museum in Falmouth. Continue onwards to the grassy quay area where it is good to sit and contemplate the view.

The quays are held in trust by the Devoran Quay Preservation Society, having been bought by the community in 1987 following the timely intervention of a local schoolteacher, Alan Roskilly. They remain a wonderful community resource, used for many activities not least in hosting the annual Devoran Regatta and being home to the Devoran Gig Club.

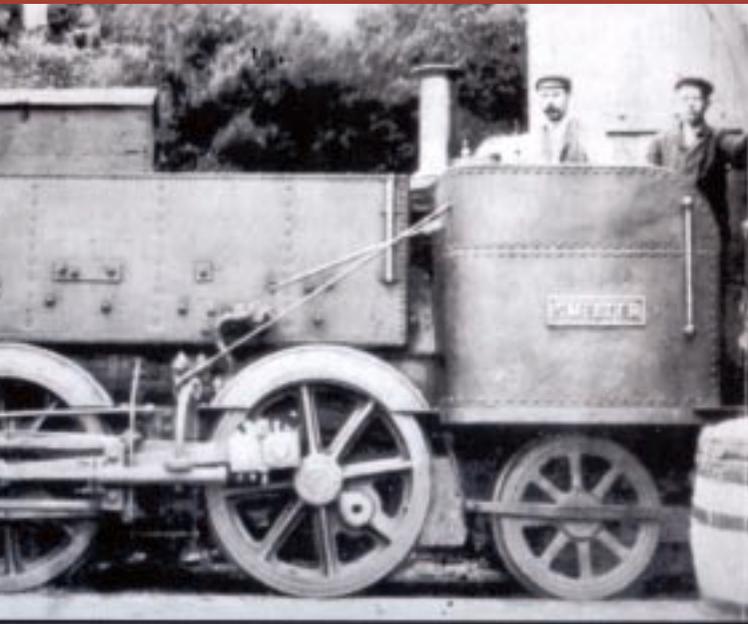
Follow the quay edge around to the left into a small inlet, skirting the shoreline along the line of stones indicating the high water mark.

An artists' impression of the view from Carclew deer park in the latter half of the 19th century. Take a few moments to study the many changes and the features that remain.



Devoran & Neighbourhood

The early 19th century was the greatest era for Cornish copper mining. Gwennap parish alone was producing over one third of the world's supply. In 1823 John Taylor, owner of the great Consolidated Mines, proposed building the Redruth to Chasewater Railway to better service his mining enterprises and by 1826 it reached the wharfs at Devoran. The Lanhydrock Estate owned much of Devoran, its steward Alfred Jenkin seized the opportunity, issuing a prospectus in 1836 advertising 'a harbour and new town'. Extensive dockside facilities **B** and fine houses were built over the following thirty years.



'Smelter'.

made up the Devoran to Chasewater Railway. Many people

As you pass around the promontory into the second inlet, called Narabo Quay, you may make out, on your right, the unusual tidal footpath which takes a route over the old embankment towards Carnon Mine and its several laid-up boats on the foreshore.

Follow the foreshore path around to the left and into a narrow footpath leading through the remains of industrial buildings and back to the Devoran Quay entrance. When back on the tarmac road outside the quay entrance, turn right and right again into the Old Tram Road.

The Devoran Gig Club has three Cornish Pilot Gigs, 'Fear Not' **B** was built by Ralph Bird at Carnon Mine in 1991.



Photograph by Phil Allen



If you look to your left a short way to the top of the hairpin bend on the hillside above, you will see the Old Quay Inn, a welcome break if you are in need of rest and sustenance.

Follow along the road leading on to Point. Originally this was an old tram-road which provided the final link in the Redruth and Chasewater Railway and was built to take goods to and from the quays and smelting works of Point and Penpol. The main railway was converted to steam locomotives in 1854 but this length remained horse drawn until its eventual closure in the 1920s.

At the end of the long straight section, opposite the property sign Hinemoa, you can access a small vantage area on your right, which is also part of the Devoran quays **C**. This may be a welcome resting place before the climb up the hill.

In the creek you see the area of the old timber pond and foreshore where, in the late 1800s, Hugh Eddy Stephens built ships which included the coastal trading vessel "Mary and Julia" at 136 tons. Nowadays this is given over to wildlife and the twice daily tides bring a wealth of food which provides rich feeding grounds for a wide range of birds. Best seen when the mudflats are exposed, you are likely to encounter some of the many varieties that visit at different times of the year. In autumn and winter you may see godwit, geese and ducks and hear the evocative call of the curlew. In summer you will usually see swans, little egret and occasionally oyster catchers. The egrets are newcomers from southern Europe and prior to 1989 only one or two birds found their way to Cornwall each year. Since then the numbers have steadily increased and a colony is now well established in our creek. Binoculars and a small bird guide will help you appreciate this delightful part of the parish.



Photograph courtesy of the Cornish Studies Library

Ships offloading at Devoran quay.



Carry on through this area and back onto the road. A little way further, before the embankment bridge at Tallack's Creek, take a sharp left up a narrow track known locally as Rocky Lane. As you pass above the two cottages in the valley take a look back to the distant views of Restronguet Creek mouth.

Take the track past the refurbished barn complex and through the gate ahead. The path follows the hedge on your right hand side passing through further gates to the tarmac road beyond. Carry straight on and continue up past Higher Devoran Farmhouse to cross the bridge over the Carnon Downs bypass. Follow the public byway into the village of Carnon Downs, crossing the roundabout and granite paved junction on into Smithy Lane and past the village shop.

Just past the shop, on your right, you may wish to take a short detour along Parc an Creeg (Field of the Barrow) to view one of four tumuli in Carnon Downs **D**.

Carry on until Smithy Lane becomes Knight's Meadows and take the route to your left marked with a red way-mark arrow.

In the field to the left you may see a raised mound at the far side of the field which is a second bronze age tumulus.

This round barrow tomb was built over 3,000 years ago in the late bronze age. It was possibly constructed at the same time as a roundhouse which was found during the construction of the new Devoran roundabout, below in the valley. Cornwall has always been important as a source of tin, however recent evidence suggests that in the bronze age much of the gold circulating Europe also came from Cornwall. This connection was explored by the National Maritime Museum Cornwall when building a replica bronze age boat, which may be seen at the Falmouth museum.



Photograph by Phil Allen

A little egret at Penpol



Further along the path, a row of mature Monterey pines are encountered along the hedge. These distinctive trees were imported from the coast of California by Victorian plant hunters. They were grown widely in Cornwall and Devon due to their salt tolerance, wind firmness and rapid growth. They are now a very distinctive feature in both counties and Feock Parish has many fine examples. The original plantings are now old trees many of which are at the end of their lives and safety issues, together with replanting, has become a priority. One tree at Trelissick Estate has been examined and it is estimated that it was probably planted in 1875.

As you rejoin a tarmac lane at the crossroads, take the left hand track.

You will soon notice magnificent views **E** on your right over the Carnon Valley and onwards to the Redruth and Carnmenellis hills in the distance.



D

A bronze age roundhouse reconstructed at Chacewater under the 'First Farms' project.

The 'Mawgawr' bronze age boat project highlighted trading links with Europe by featuring the bronze age 'Nebra Sky Disc'. This world heritage status object was found recently near Leipzig in Germany and has been demonstrated to contain gold from the Carnon Valley.



Carry along this track and on to the footpath ahead, ignoring the wooden stile to your right. The footpath bends to the right, downhill to meet another farm track at which you turn left leading to the main road at Old Carnon Hill. Cross the road and take the byway beyond bearing downhill to the left at the next fork. This lane brings you down to the busy A39 bypass road, which you may cross using the central reservation.



- Public house
Pubs have toilet facilities for customers use.
- QR point

The concrete reservoir here F on the left was part of the local water supply to Devoran which was derived from springs above.

The lawn area on the lower side of the track was once the original reservoir for the system. The prospectus for the 'New Town' of Devoran made reference to the abundance of springs and pure water and many of the homes were built with their own wells, however in 1864 the Devoran Water Company requested permission to break the Turnpike Road in order to lay pipes to connect the reservoir with the village. Such a Water Company was a novel enterprise at this time, although in keeping with Devoran's 'New Town' status. The impetus for improvement had come from the national Cholera outbreaks early in the 1800s. Severe outbreaks had led to newspaper coverage reminiscent of the Ebola crisis in modern times and the first Public Health Act was passed in 1848. The first Cornish municipal water undertakings were in Penzance and Falmouth, being entry ports in greatest fear of the Cholera contagion. The neighbouring Truro Water Company was only founded later in 1875.

Having crossed the dual carriageway, take the road uphill towards Mid Devoran Farm. Go around the cattle grid and follow the route through the farm complex.

After passing a large yard on your right, where the track takes a sharp left turn, take the farmyard gate on your right. Follow the right hand hedge through the rough yard, continuing downhill through a gap in the hedge and along the right hand hedge to a gate at the bottom of the field. Go through the gate and turn left along the path.

On your right you will see Devoran Church . The following is an account of laying the foundation stone posted in the Royal Cornwall Gazette on the 15th September 1854:

'On Monday afternoon the foundation stone of a new Church for the increasing little town of Devoran, in the parish of Feock, was laid by T. J. A. Robartes Esq M.P. the owner of the property, and the Rev. Thomas Phillpotts, the vicar. Devoran, situated at the highest navigable part of Restronguet Creek, is a principle shipping place for the mines of Gwennap and its neighbourhood; a mineral rail road, which is now being adapted for locomotives, passing through the district, and having its terminus here. It is consequently much frequented by coastal shipping, and a village, which may now claim to be called a small town, flourishing and pleasantly situated, has sprung up on the spot. The village schoolroom, to which an appropriate ecclesiastical character has been carefully given, both in outward appearance and internal arrangements, was licensed a few years since for Divine Services; but this has proved very insufficient to accommodate worshippers, and it has been determined to build a new church.'

Similarly, a report on 15th September 1856 gave an account of the opening:

'The new Church at Devoran, which for some time has been a conspicuous object on the road between Truro and Falmouth, was opened for Divine Service, under the licence of the Lord Bishop, on Monday last. The church was designed by the vicar the Rev. Thomas Phillpotts, it was carried out in its details by Mr Pearson of London and executed by Mr Gerrish, builder of Feock, and Mr Salmon, carpenter of Truro. Many children had been reserved for baptism in the new church, and it was intended to baptise them on this occasion, but the difficulty in finding room for the sponsors and friends in a church, thronged to the utmost, prevented. One however was baptised, an infant of 8 days old, grand-daughter of the mason who built the church, whose claim was admitted that his little one should be the first. The day was closed by a feast for the children of the schools of Devoran and Feock, provided on a liberal scale by the inhabitants of Devoran, who claimed it was their own privilege, and would allow no others to share in the gratification. Above two hundred children were present.'

Carry on over the stile, turning right, down the track into Devoran village.

On the corner at the crossroads are the old buildings of Devoran school built in 1846 and designed by the same architect Mr Pearson. His work in the area was so successful that he was later engaged to design and supervise the building of Truro Cathedral.

Follow down the hill into Market Street. On your right you will see a small garden belonging to the Parish Council which commemorates the Lobb brothers, plant hunters of the mid-1800s . Their father had been carpenter at the great Carclew estate, across the valley, where their interest in horticulture was kindled.

The brothers explored both the Far East and the Americas for exotic plants bringing back over 600 new species to Britain. William was responsible for the commercial introduction of the monkey puzzle tree and, while in the Monterey region of California, was the first collector to gather the seeds of trees in bulk including that of the giant sequoia redwood.

*19th century Cornish plant hunters -
A giant tree of the Americas.*



Photograph courtesy of Marie Bird

This road takes its name from the Market House built in 1862 and now houses the parish council office and Devoran Pre-School.

At the bottom of the hill turn to your left to find yourself back at your start point.

This walk leaflet was produced by Feock Parish Council with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Design and illustration by graeme@graemerust.com



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