

Lopwell Dam Local Nature Reserve Walk



Key

- Tidal Ford
- Lopwell Local Nature Reserve
- Information Board
- Parking
- Hazard Warning Sign
- Footpath
- Road
- Toilets (Seasonal)



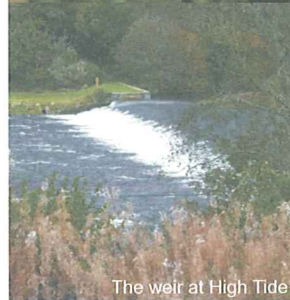
Cowslips



The Old Pump House



Oxeye Daisy



The weir at High Tide



Meadow Grasshopper

Lopwell Dam Local Nature Reserve Walk

- Direction
- Interpretation
- Wildlife
- History

Approx. 2 km / 1.25 miles - 45mins - 1 hour

1 At the car park three information boards on the Old Pump House show the wildlife and history of Lopwell and the nearby Maristow Estate.

Looking towards the Saltmarsh on the opposite side of the Tavy estuary, there is a small Willow. Look out for Kingfishers fishing from the lower branches. Mullet can be seen spawning at low water during the summer. At high water Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout leap from the water.

2 Head towards the stone Camping Barn, over the style / gate to the right and follow the path up to the Wild Flower and Butterfly Meadow. Here there is an information board showing the insect life.



Brimstone Butterfly
© John Maddock

Trees in this area include Rowan, Willow and Wild Cherry, whilst plants such as Yellow (Hay) Rattle, Self-Heal, Bugle and Tufted Vetch grow in the grass. Take care during the summer months when walking on the grass as there are different species of grasshopper. Look out for the Brimstone caterpillars on the leaves of their host plant, Alder Buckthorn.

3 Return back down the path and turn right passing the Camping Barn then follow the road to the start of the tidal walkway.
 (IMPORTANT- Please check the tide table signs so you don't get cut-off at high water.) Here you will see the fish pass or ladder.



Adult Atlantic Grey Seal
© National Seal Sanctuary

Look out for Atlantic Salmon and Sea Trout swimming up-stream to spawn in the headwaters of the Tavy. At high water, you may also see Atlantic Grey Seals hunting for fish in the estuary. On the hard surfaces within the estuary itself, you will see Channel Wrack algae. Huge swarms of Mysis or Opossum Shrimp travel up and down the estuary with the tide. There may be millions of these shrimp, the primary food source for many fish.



Mysis (Opossum Shrimp) - actual size c.30mm © John Rundle

4 Carry on across the tidal ford, on reaching the other side by the Saltmarsh there is an information board showing the wildlife and history of the site. This area is the most northerly Saltmarsh on the Tavy estuary and is a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

The Tamar, Tavy and Lynher estuaries host more than 30% of Devon and Cornwall's Saltmarsh. Here you will find Saltmarsh Grass, Sea Aster, English Scurvy Grass, Sea Club-Rush and Sea Arrow Grass. The channels within the Saltmarsh provide a nursery for young Bass. The Saltmarsh Wolf Spider can be found here along with the Short Winged Cone Head, a rare bush cricket.



Foxglove

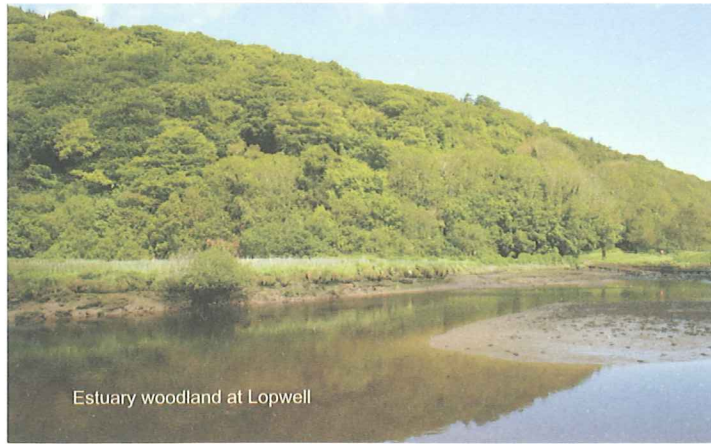
➔ **5** Turn right and follow the footpath through Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland. On your right is a clearing from where you can see the Freshwater Marsh habitat.

Bank-side beds of the Common Reed and Greater Tussock Sedge and associated plants including Water Forget-me-not, Yellow Iris and Water Milfoil can be seen. These backwaters are used by many young freshwater fish as a nursery or refuge. You may see Herons and Kingfishers and in the summer there are many species of Dragonfly.

➔ **6** Carry on along the path, turn left up the bank and continue up the steps; here is Wheal Maristow.

This impressive mineshaft was used for mining Silver and Lead. Mining in this area dates back to the 13th century. Adjacent the mineshaft is Lopwell Cottage or Ferry Man's Cottage. Around 1918 the Vivian brothers used to live here and ferried people across the river in a wooden rowing boat before the Dam was built in 1953.

The Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland supports many species including Sessile Oak and Pedunculate Oak, Beech, Rowan, Holly and Hazel. On the ground you may see Wood Anemone, Common Dog-violet and Bluebell, all species associated with well-established woodland. Ferns and mosses include Hart's



Estuary woodland at Lopwell



Otter
© Paul Glendell / English Nature

Tongue Fern, Male Fern, Lady Fern and Crescent-Cup Liverwort. On branches of mature Oaks you will find the Common Polypody Fern. Sparrow Hawks

use the glades to hunt for small birds, whilst at night Tawny Owls hunt for small mammals in the dense undergrowth. All three species of native woodpecker, Green Woodpecker, Greater Spotted Woodpecker and Lesser-Spotted Woodpecker have been seen here.

➔ **7** Carry on along the path and cross a small spring.

Look for Roe Deer prints in the mud. Roe Deer often come down from the woodland to drink here. Moving along the path look up in the trees at the bat boxes placed along this section. Bats regularly roosting in the boxes include Common Pipistrelle and Daubenton's Bat.



Roe Deer
© Steve Chadd / English Nature

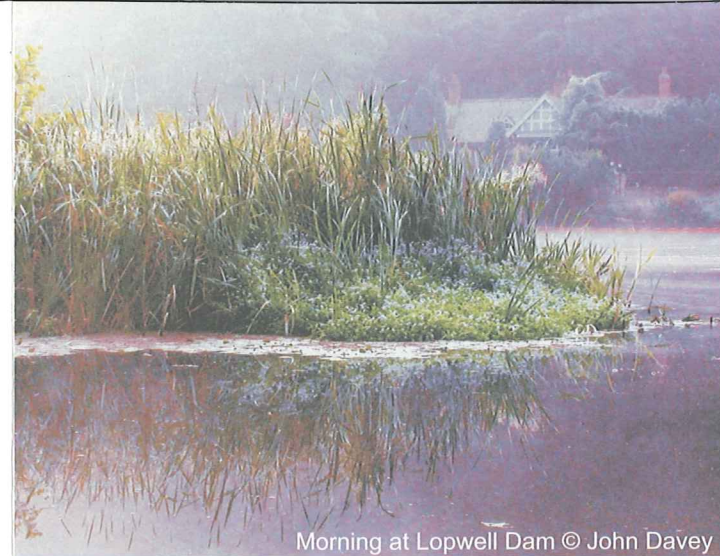
➔ **8** At the end of the path, before returning to the start of the walk, you will see a clearing.

This woodland glade is a hive of activity in the summer with many butterflies, such as the Silver-washed Fritillary, Comma, and Brimstone feeding on Buddleia.



Silver-washed Fritillary
© Peter Glanville

➔ From here walk back across the dam and return to the car park.



Morning at Lopwell Dam © John Davey

Lopwell Dam, a site of breathtaking beauty, is enjoyed by local people and visitors alike, especially for bird watching and walking. It is found at the upper tidal mark on the river Tavy, three miles north of Plymouth and seven miles from Tavistock.

How to reach Lopwell Dam:



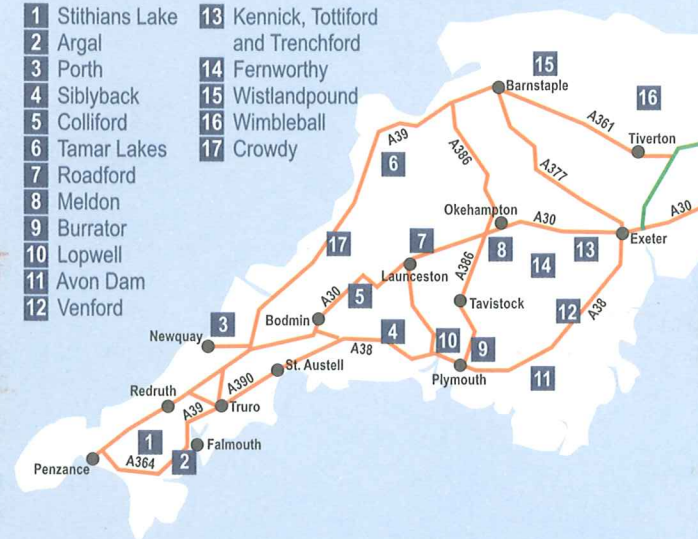
Map Reference:
(OS Explorer 108)
475 649

By road: From the A386 Plymouth - Tavistock road follow the brown signs to the Dam, indicated by the duck symbol, passing Buckland Abbey. Take care, this road is narrow in places.

By bus: Take the 55 service (Mon - Sat) from Yelverton (regular connections from Plymouth / Tavistock) to Milton Combe. There is then a 1½ mile walk to Lopwell.

By rail: Take the Tamar Valley Line from Plymouth to Bere Ferrers (⇄). Lopwell is a 2 mile walk from the station. (N.B. The ford at Lopwell is not passable at high tide - check tide times in advance.)
Lopwell also lies on the route of the **Tamar Valley Discovery Trail** between Plymouth and Launceston, and the Lopwell Dam cycle link from the Plym Valley / National Cycle Route 27.

The Lakes of South West England



South West Lakes Trust is a charity which promotes and enhances recreation, access, nature conservation and education on and around inland waters in the South West of England, for the benefit of the general public.

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Further details on all Trust activities and how you can become involved with its work, including becoming a 'Friend of the Trust' are available by contacting us at: South West Lakes Trust, Lidn Park, Quarry Crescent, Pennygillam Industrial Estate, Launceston, Cornwall, PL15 7PF
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