

## **Working wilderness**

A self guided walk on Bodmin Moor, Cornwall



Experience the majestic loneliness of moorland

Find out how this wild landscape of craggy tors and valleys was formed

Discover how humans have exploited its resources for over 5,000 years

Enjoy 360-degree panoramic views of Devon and Cornwall

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**the stories of our landscapes  
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**Created in collaboration with**



This walk was a runner up in a competition to design a walk held in September 2012 by the U3A in collaboration with the RGS-IBG



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Cover image: The Cheesewring © Mike Scott

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# Working wilderness

## Discover five millennia of human activity on Bodmin Moor

Your initial impression of the moor might be of a bleak and desolate environment. This flat, uncultivated land, broken up by the odd stunted tree or the eerie ruins of Cornwall's mining industry can appear an inhospitable place.

But look a little closer and there's much to discover. This walk explores over five thousand years of human activity, finding evidence of where people lived and worked.



Within a small area you'll discover Bronze-Age ritual sites, Neolithic hilltop enclosures, medieval tin works, a gravity-defying rock formation, the cave-home of an eighteenth century philosopher and a huge granite quarry which supplied the stone for Tower Bridge.

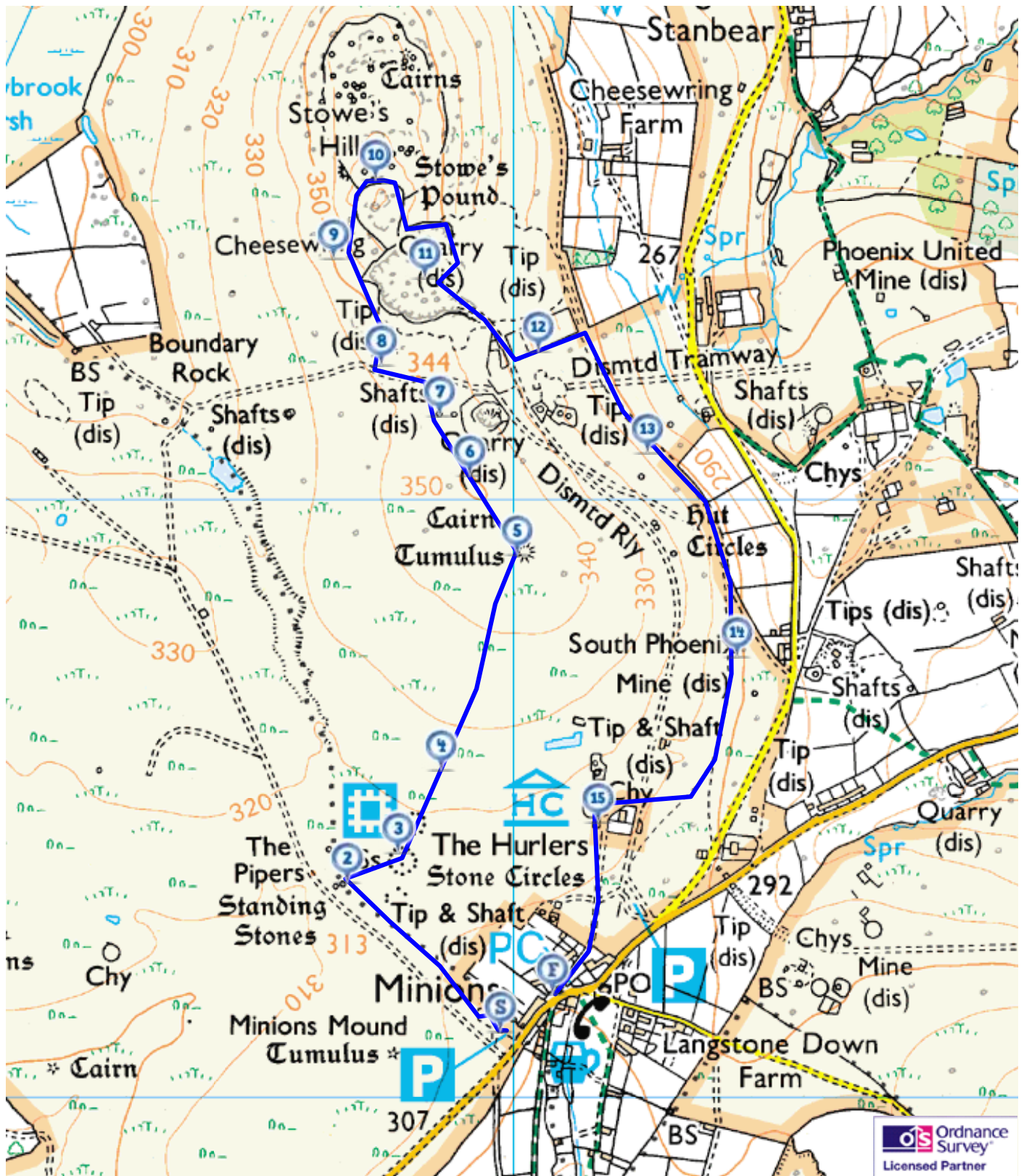
Along with the outstanding views over Cornwall and Devon this walk offers you the opportunity to become immersed in this high moorland and understand how geography, history and geology have shaped this dramatic landscape.

Images: Mysterious stone circle shrouded in mist© Pat Wilson / Derelict mine building© Mike Scott

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## Route overview



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## Practical information

<b>Location</b>	Bodmin Moor, Cornwall
<b>Getting there</b>	<p><b>There is no public transport available to the walk location. You are advised to use your own transport to reach the moor.</b></p> <p><b>From the A30 at Launceston:</b> take the B3254 signed to South Petherwin, Congdon's Shop and Upton Cross. At the crossroads in Upton Cross turn right to Minions village. Drive through the village and park in the Hurlers Car Park.</p> <p><b>From the A38 turn into Liskeard:</b> take the B3254 signed to Pensilva and Upton Cross. About 1 mile from Liskeard the road forks, signed St Cleer to the left. Go through St Cleer, passing the church on the right. After about 1 mile reach the crossroads and turn right to Minions, 2 miles further on. Park in the Hurlers Car Park just before the village.</p>
<b>Start &amp; finish point</b>	The Hurlers car park, Minions, PL14 5LE
<b>Distance</b>	2 ½ miles
<b>Optional extension</b>	There is a chance to extend the walk by just under a mile to visit South Phoenix Mine. See Directions 14 for details.
<b>Level</b>	Moderate – Mostly easy but one section involves climbing a steep gradient along uneven, indistinct paths.
<b>Terrain</b>	Mostly on level moorland tracks. One short scrambling climb on an indistinct path through boulders followed by a short steep descent. An alternative route is suggested (omitting Stops 9 and 10).
<b>Conditions</b>	Parts of the walk can be muddy. Suitable clothing and boots are recommended.

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**Please note**

Weather conditions can change quickly on high moorland. It is not recommended to try this walk in thick mist or heavy rain. See also the important note on navigation (page 10).

**Suitable for**

Dogs - The area is commonly used by dog walkers but be aware that cattle, sheep and ponies wander freely.

The walk is not suitable for pushchairs or wheelchairs.

**Refreshments**

In Minions village: Hurlers Halt tea shop, The Cheesewring Hotel, Minions Shop and Tea Rooms

Other places nearby: The Lakeside Café at Siblyback Lake plus various shops and cafés in Liskeard

**Toilets**

Public toilets at Minions village

**Places to visit**

**Liskeard and District Museum** is open Mon-Sat from 11am. Free entry, Foresters Hall, 1 Pike St, Liskeard PL14 3JE. Tel: 01579 346087

**Siblyback Lake Country Park** offers outdoor activities including lakeside walks, boat hire, fishing, camping. Near Liskeard, PL14 6ER. Tel: 01579 346522

**Nearby ancient monuments**

**Long Tom** - a phallic-shaped medieval wayside cross (approx. 1 mile southwest of Minions)

**Trethevy Quoit** - a well-preserved Neolithic burial chamber (1 mile northeast of St Cleer, off B3254)

**King Doniert's Stone** - a decorated ninth century cross that commemorates the last King of Cornwall (1 mile northwest of St Cleer, off B3254).

**Visitor information**

**Liskeard Tourist Information Centre** at Liskeard and District Museum. Tel: 01579 349148



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## Start and end of the route



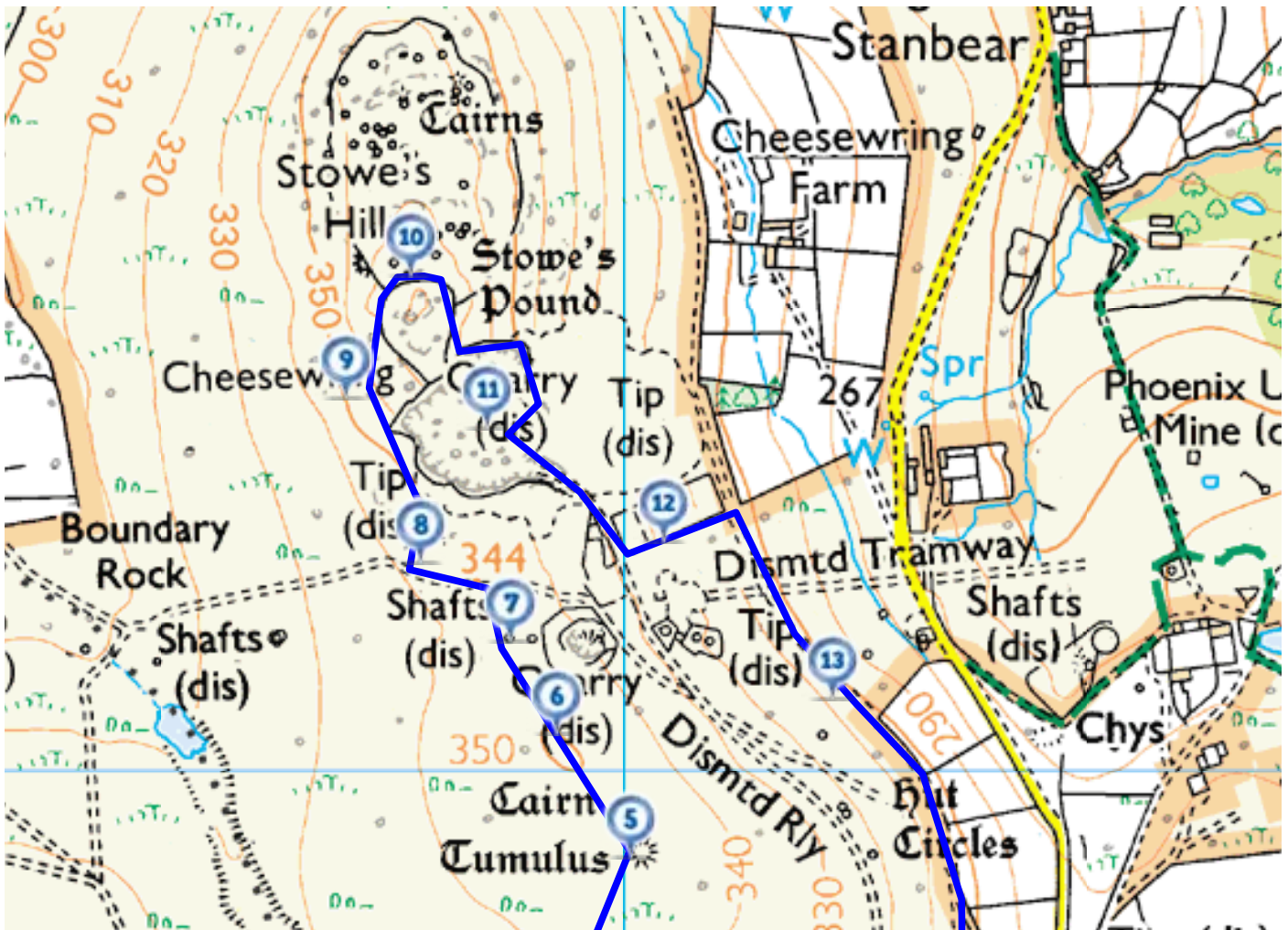
### Stopping points

- 5.** The Hurlers car park
- 2.** The Pipers standing stones
- 3.** The Hurlers stone circle
- 4.** Row of lode-back pits
- 5.** Rillaton Barrow
- ... ..
- 14.** View of South Phoenix Mine
- 15.** Minions Heritage Centre, former Houseman's Shaft engine house
- F.** Post Office and Minions Shop and Tea Rooms, Minions village



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## Middle of the route



### Stopping points

- 6. Disused quarry - broken stones
- 7. Stowe's Great Lode - mine shaft
- 8. Daniel Gumb's cave
- 9. The Cheesewring
- 10. Stowe's Pound hilltop enclosure
- 11. Cheesewring Quarry
- 12. Remains of quarry workers' cottages
- 13. Disused Liskeard and Caradon Railway line

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## Important note on navigation

**Much of this walk is across moorland with no roads and no signposts.**

Before beginning the walk, **familiarise yourself with these three key landmarks.** We will refer to them in the walk commentary.

### 1. Caradon Hill (right)

An obvious hill with a tall communications mast on top, behind Minions village.



### 2. Minions Heritage Centre (above)

A square stone building and tall chimney (situated in a clump of dark trees).



### 3. Stowe's Hill (above)

An obvious hill with exposed quarry face on the skyline ahead of you.

Caradon Hill © Martin Bodman, Geograph (CCL)  
Minions Heritage Centre © Tony Atkin, Geograph (CCL)  
Stowe's Hill © Mike Scott

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## Directions

These directions are for use with the audio commentary. Listen to each track then read the directions below to get to the next stop.

### 1. Welcome to Bodmin Moor

#### The Hurlers car park, Minions village

##### Directions 1

Go to the top of the car park where there are two information boards. From here, take the steps on the left and go onto the grassy area. With your back to the steps, turn left across the grass until you reach a broad stony track that leads onto the moor. Turn right and continue along the track for about 500 metres. Stop when you reach two standing stones on the right of the track, each about two metres high. Listen here to Track 2.

### 2. Stories in the stone

#### The Pipers

##### Directions 2

Walk about 100 metres in the direction of the stone building and clump of trees. Continue until you are inside a circle of standing stones. Stop next to the waist-high stone in the centre. Listen to Track 3.

### 3. Into the unknown

#### The Hurlers

##### Directions 3

Walk uphill from the large circle keeping the tall stone building and clump of trees on your right. Go through the next circle and follow a grassy path, heading for some distinctive mounds which cross your path about 20 metres from the second circle. Stop when you reach this line of mounds. Listen to Track 4.

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#### **4. Humps and hollows**

##### **Lode-back pits**

###### **Directions 4**

With the stone house and trees on your right, continue up the slope following the grassy path. Pass to the right of an isolated boulder and through another line of lode-back pits. Continue ahead passing to the right of another isolated boulder lying on the ground. Pass through a third line of pits. As you reach the top of the slope, straight ahead, you will see a very large mound called Rillaton Barrow marked as a 'tumulus' on the map. Listen to Track 5.

#### **5. Treasure trove**

##### **Rillaton Barrow**

###### **Directions 5**

Stand with the small burial chamber on your left and ahead of you is Stowes Hill (showing the face of a large quarry and a pillar of boulders on the top). Set off up the slope toward this. In about 150 metres you will see a cluster of granite boulders around a saucer shaped shallow depression. Stop here to study the scattered stones. Listen to Track 6.

#### **6. Groovy stones**

##### **Disused quarry between Rillaton Barrow and Stowe's Great Lode**

###### **Directions 6**

Walk back to the track and continue ahead for about another 150 metres to reach an area on the right enclosed by a barbed wire fence. Walk along the fence until you reach the corner where you can see the small hollow of a filled in mine shaft. Listen to Track 7.

#### **7. Going deeper**

##### **Stowe's Great Lode**

###### **Directions 7**

Continue towards the quarry ahead. In about 100 metres you will meet an obvious track stretching from left to right following an embankment. Turn left to follow this track, keeping the embankment on your right. After about 200 metres the embankment peters out and where you see a low stone wall set in the cutting, you will find a crossroads of paths.

Turn right up a wide, straight track towards four grassy humps scattered with boulders. These are dumps of waste from the quarry. Turn right immediately before the first dump and follow it round for about 20 metres, keeping it on your left. Tucked in a recess between dumps, you will find a small cave-like structure. Listen to Track 8.



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## 8. An extraordinary story

### Daniel Gumb's cave

#### Directions 8

Walk up above Daniel Gumb's cave and you will find a path beside a wire fence near the quarry edge. Follow this path towards the prominent pile of rocks above you. Stop at this pile of rocks, which is called the Cheesewring.

**NOTE:** The approach to the Cheesewring involves following an indistinct path up between boulders. The descent to the quarry on the other side of the hill also involves a steep path. If you prefer not to go up to the Cheesewring itself, please use the alternative directions for an easier route into the quarry. This will mean missing Stops 9 and 10.

#### Alternative route to Stop 11 (Cheesewring Quarry)

From Daniel Gumb's cave, retrace your steps back to the cutting and embankment. Turn left and with the embankment now on your left, follow the track until it takes a sharp bend to the right (200 metres). To your left is a granite pillar with three iron hoops set in the side. Step over the low bank ahead of you and walk down the grassy slope onto a broad track running across the hillside. Turn left along the track and enter the Cheesewring quarry via the dramatic cleft through the rock.

## 9. Tor story

### The Cheesewring

#### Directions 9

With the Cheesewring on your right, pick your way up the slope towards the top of the hill. Stop when you reach the top where you'll see other 'mini cheesewrings' around you. Listen here to Track 10.

## 10. Safe haven and summer pasture

### Stowe's Pound

#### Directions 10

If the weather is clear do take time to enjoy the 360-degree view from here. When you are ready, make your way back down the hill to the wire fence near the quarry edge. Turn left away from the Cheesewring and follow the fence downhill. It is here where the path becomes uneven and steep, please take care. Pick a safe path downhill which will lead you round into the quarry. Stop when you are in the bottom of the quarry. Listen to Track 11.

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## **11. Between a rock and a hard place**

### **Cheesewring Quarry**

#### **Directions 11**

Go through the quarry and out the other side. Continue walking for about 300 metres until you reach a line of large granite blocks on the right of the track. Turn left downhill towards a granite gatepost with a rounded top (20 metres). Turn left and walk along the track for a short while to look up at the row of stoneworks and hillocks which mark the site of quarrymen's cottages. Listen to Track 12.

## **12. A hard and lonely life**

### **Remains of quarry workers' cottages**

#### **Directions 12**

Walk back to the granite post. From this point, continue downhill for about 100 metres, keeping the 'garden wall' on your left. At the end of the wall you meet a wide track running left to right. Stop at this junction. Listen to Track 13.

## **13. On the right track**

### **Disused Liskeard and Caradon Railway line**

#### **Directions 13**

Turn towards the Caradon mast and follow the railway track for just over half a mile, enjoying the luxuriant views (if the weather is clear). Stop when you reach an obvious fork, with the railway track continuing ahead and a track going to the left down beside a stone wall. On the right of the track is a small stone marked with the number two indicating it is the second toll marker from Minions. Listen to Track 14.

## **14. A last gasp**

### **View across to South Phoenix Mine**

#### **Directions 14**

You now have an option to extend the walk by visiting the South Phoenix Mine engine house. To do this follow Directions 14b.

To continue to the next stop follow the upper track round for just over half a mile. Just after passing through four large granite blocks, take the path that bends uphill (right) towards a building with solar panels. Just before the building, by a lonely hawthorn tree, turn right onto a smaller grassy path. Keep the building and trees on your left. Stop when you reach an engine house which is known as Houseman's Shaft.

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## **14b. Optional walk extension**

### **South Phoenix Mine**

#### **Directions 14b: walk extension to South Phoenix Mine**

Follow the lower path beside the wall down to South Phoenix Farm and onto a road. About 100 metres down from the farm is a public footpath that leads to the engine house. Around you are the remains of some of the buildings associated with the mine, winding houses, boiler houses, ore-crushing stamps and so on.

Behind the engine house on the far side of the green area, a finger post indicates a path leading downhill into a small scrubby wood. Following this brings you past the mine captain's house, now called Phoenix House, and out onto the extensive dressing floors where the ore was crushed and processed. There is also evidence of the reservoirs that held the water necessary for the steam boilers and further dressing of the ores.

Keeping Phoenix House on the left, a path curves round leading onto the waste tips. Anyone interested in geology or who likes finding attractive fragments of rock will enjoy wandering across this 'moonscape'.

Still with Phoenix House on the left, follow the track up the slope through trees hung with impressive lichens. Pass some cottages on the left and regain the road by South Phoenix Farm. Follow the road for about 700 metres up towards Minions. You will find a car park before you reach the village. Turn through this towards the group of dark trees and you will see an engine house. This is Stop 15.

## **15. Mining our heritage**

### **Minions Heritage Centre, former Houseman's Shaft engine house**

#### **Directions 15**

From beside the engine house, a path then a lane lead 300 metres past the cottages and into Minions village. Listen to Track 16.

## **16. A 'new' village**

### **Post Office and Minions Shop and Tea Rooms**

#### **Directions 16**

This is the end of the walk and a good stopping place for well-earned refreshment. A short 300 metre walk through the village brings you back to the Hurlers car park where we began.



Scenes from centuries of human settlement on Bodmin Moor  
© Mike Scott / Pat Wilson



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## **Further information**

### **Best of Bodmin Moor**

[www.bestofbodminmoor.co.uk](http://www.bestofbodminmoor.co.uk)

### **Cornish Mining World Heritage Site**

[www.cornish-mining.org.uk](http://www.cornish-mining.org.uk)

### **Cornwall Heritage Trust**

[www.cornwallheritagetrust.org](http://www.cornwallheritagetrust.org)

### **Historic Cornwall**

[www.historic-cornwall.org.uk](http://www.historic-cornwall.org.uk)

### **Hurlers Halt, Minions**

[www.hurlers-halt.co.uk](http://www.hurlers-halt.co.uk)

### **Liskeard & District Museum**

[www.liskeard.gov.uk/Museum.aspx](http://www.liskeard.gov.uk/Museum.aspx)

### **Mining Artifacts**

[www.miningartifacts.org](http://www.miningartifacts.org)

### **Minions village**

[www.minions-cornwall.co.uk](http://www.minions-cornwall.co.uk)

### **Siblyback Lake**

[www.swlakestrust.org.uk/lakes-and-facilities/the-lakes/siblyback-lake](http://www.swlakestrust.org.uk/lakes-and-facilities/the-lakes/siblyback-lake)

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## Credits

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- **Mike Scott** for creating the walk, providing photographs and the audio commentary
- **Pat Wilson** for providing advice on the walk commentary and providing photographs
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