

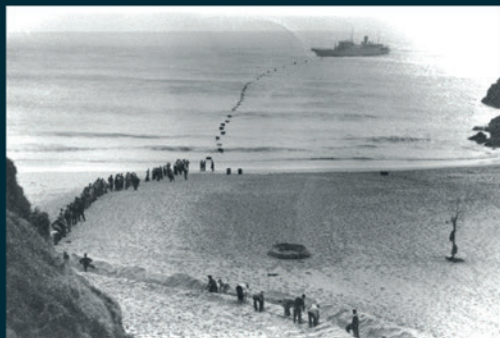
# Porthcurno

A POCKET GUIDE TO

MINACK THEATRE




A place like no other, the world-famous **Minack Theatre** is a must-see for visitors to Cornwall. Discover the extraordinary story of how it was created and experience the magic of live theatre in this iconic space. The Minack stages many live performances and at other times you can explore the dramatic site and sub-tropical garden full of exotic plants. Advance booking essential especially in school holidays.



## Porthcurno Beach

In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the remote beach at Porthcurno became internationally famous as the British terminal for submarine telegraph cables, the first of which was landed in 1870, as part of an international link stretching from the UK to India. Today, the golden sands and blue green bay are a magnet for visitors. The beach has a staffed lifeguard station from May to September. Dogs are not allowed on the beach in July and August (10am to 6pm).

The South West Coast Path. Walk west from Porthwarra around Gwennap Head past the local National Coastwatch Institute lookout point towards Nanjizal beach and Land's End. Spot the two conical markers for the Runnelstone rocks on Gwennap Head.



Porthwarra is a pretty, coastal village with a cove and slipway. At the foot of the a small seasonal cafe, car park and toilet facilities. A second tunnel, leading slipway is a tunnel dug by local tin miners to give farmers horse-and-cart access to the beach to collect seaweed. A second tunnel, leading seawards, is the fishermen's access to the tidal 'bully's' built in the rocks to store shellfish. Dogs are not allowed on the beach in July and August.

Porthchapel Beach. This beautiful sandy beach is accessible by a footpath from St Levan Church car park or from the South West Coast Path. The final descent to the beach is very steep and there are no lifeguards or facilities. Dogs are not allowed on this beach between Easter and 1 October.



**PK Porthcurno:** Museum of Global Communication in the centre of Porthcurno tells the amazing story of how, for over a century, this remote valley was at the centre of international telegraphy. Discover the World War II bunker, the secret hub of Britain's wartime communications, and visit the cable hut where the underwater cables came ashore.

Look out for a **pillbox gun emplacement** on the cliffs east of Porthcurno which formed part of the World War II defences for the Telegraph Station.



The Church of St Levan is nestled at the head of a tiny valley running down to Porthchapel Beach. Parts of the building date from the 13<sup>th</sup> century. The ancient carved pew ends contain some unusual designs. Look for St Levan's Stone near the south porch. It is prophesied that when a pack pony can ride through the split in the stone, the world will end. The ashes of Rowena Cade, creator of the Minack Theatre, are buried in the churchyard, near the east gate.

Green Bay and Peden Vounder. At low tide, it is often possible to walk towards the Logan Rock from Porthcurno crossing Green Bay and Peden Vounder Beaches. Peden Vounder can be accessed from the South West Coast Path, but the descent is steep and difficult, so not for the faint-hearted. It is also frequented by naturists. Care must be taken if walking on the beach from Porthcurno, as the tide turns quickly and visitors can easily get cut off.



Penberth Cove is reached down a long, wooded valley or from the Coast Path. It is one of the last remaining traditional fishing coves in Cornwall. There is no car park in the cove.



To the east of Porthcurno Bay is the spectacular promontory of Trecyn Dinas, the site of an Iron Age cliff castle. The most famous feature of Trecyn Dinas is the **Logan Rock**, a large boulder perched on the headland which, even though it weighs around 80 tonnes, is so finely balanced it can be rocked.

The Holy Well of St Levan is a Historic England listed monument. Its water is used for baptisms in the church and is said to cure toothache and eye diseases.



**Rospletha Cliff.** The footings of a 60 metre high mast are visible on this headland. The mast was installed in 1902 to eavesdrop on Marconi's wireless radio experiments on the Lizard.

The famous **White Pyramid** is a useful marker for fishermen working near the dangerous Runnelstone rocks.



**Treen** is a picturesque village with a shop, toilets, car park, a popular clifftop campsite and the Logan Rock Inn. You can reach it via the South West Coast Path.





Enjoy breath-taking views, historic landmarks, wooded valleys and sub-tropical plants. There are some tough stony climbs and fields to cross, but nothing too adventurous - the rewards are well worth the effort!

Along both of these walks you may see all manner of wildlife and flora including seals, dolphins, lizards, slow worms, buzzards, choughs, orchids and palms.

Both routes take around 90 minutes at a leisurely pace

ROUTE #1 +40min for the extension to Porthgwarra

ROUTE #2 +20min if you explore the Logan Rock

**WC** THERE ARE PUBLIC TOILETS IN PORTHCURNO & PORTHGWARRA

**C** CAFES IN TREEN, PORTHCURNO & PORTHGWARRA

**CS** SOME CAMPSITES HAVE FACILITIES FOR CUSTOMERS

## A Surprising Little Walk

WALK ONE

The old hamlet of St Levan Churchtown is a hidden spot, just beyond the turning to the Minack Theatre and a great place to begin a walk.

**1** To reach our start point, follow the signs to the Minack Theatre up the hill from Porthcurno. Continue past the turning to the Minack, passing houses and then countryside and look for a little sign marking the car park on the right, just before St Levan Church. **A** There is a small charge to park. Leaving the car park on foot, turn right along the lane, past the church. At the end of the lane turn right, taking the steps on your right through a rare coffin gate into the churchyard.

**2** Turn left up the hill through a second coffin gate and keep straight ahead on the field path towards a house with two chimneys. This is the hamlet of Rospletha **B**. At Rospletha turn left, then bear right around the end of the houses and follow the unmade lane through two field gates, downhill to Porthcurno village. Cross the main road and bear right along Old Cable Lane. As you pass in front of PK Porthcurno museum **C**, look out for the Anderson shelter on your left. Keep to the main paths down towards the beach.

**3** Now at a signed junction of paths **D**, there is a choice of either crossing the beach and then a hard climb up the cliff path to the Minack Theatre... or an easier climb up the road in front of the beach cafe, taking the turning left at the top towards the Minack Theatre. Whichever route you choose, at the Minack **E** head for the wooden hut between the tarmac and grass car parks and look for a kissing gate leading onto the Coast Path.

**4** Follow the Coast Path to Wireless Point on Rospletha Cliff **F** otherwise known as Pedn-mén-an-Mere. Turn left out to the headland and look for a plaque by the rusty metal 'mast housing' which explains its place in history. Return to the main route and keep left along the Coast Path. At the RSPCA memorial, turn right up the steps and cross a wooden bridge over a stream. Just beyond the bridge look for St Levan's Well **G** on your left. Take the inland path right up the valley, then bear right back across the stream onto a rough track leading uphill and back to the church.

Or... continue west on the Coast Path to picturesque Porthgwarra Cove where there is a cafe and toilets. From Porthgwarra retrace your steps using the little stream at Porthchapel as a waypoint, before heading up the valley to your starting point.

## Open Spaces & Villages

WALK TWO

A walk with magnificent coastal vistas, pretty Cornish villages and fabulous views inland. Some scrambling involved.

**1** Begin this walk from the bottom corner of the Porthcurno Beach car park. Follow the main path towards the beach until you see the lifeguard station ahead. **D** Turn left at the Coast Path marker and follow the path up the cliffside, through golden granite, bracken and heather, with the vista of Treen Cliffs and Mount's Bay. At the top, keep left and later turn right at the stone stile. Now you're on the main Coast Path heading east. At a fork in the path you can take either route - the inland path is easier walking, but the footpath running close to the cliffs has better views. As the views open out to Treen Cliffs you will see the Logan Rock and the Lizard Peninsula ahead and, on a clear day, Goonhilly Earth Station in the distance. Both routes will bring you to a granite bench and small signpost **H**. Head inland **Or...** take a walk to Treen Cliffs and return to this spot. Take the track inland here, passing Treen Campsite, **J** then on along the farm track to Treen village.

**2** The car park at Treen is an alternative starting point for this walk.

**3** Treen is a picture-perfect Cornish village. There is a cafe, toilets, a great pub and the campsite has a grocery shop. As you enter the village, pass the cafe and, where the road bends downhill to the right, look for two tracks branching off on the left. Take the right-hand path and follow the footpath sign leading past cottages out into open countryside with views to the right of Chapel Cam Brea and Bartinney Downs. **K**

**4** Keep left following the direction of the hedge. Cross five fields through gates and stiles and on the sixth, the path skirts two sides of the field bringing you out at Trendrennen Farm. **L**

**5** Turn left, following the wall past the big pine tree. Around here the paths differ from official maps, so at the gateway go straight ahead crossing over the field towards a stone stile with a wooden bar in front of it. On a clear day you will see the Wolf Rock Lighthouse directly ahead - 10 miles out to sea. Cross the stile and the next field, then turn right. The path turns downhill and becomes a green lane (look for patches of concrete, at this point you are above the Second World War bunker of the Telegraph Station).

**6** At the bottom of the green lane turn left at the little road, and back to PK Porthcurno **C** and the car park. Well done!

This map was made whilst walking the routes, you may prefer to use an official map, but be aware that at Trendrennen Farm the paths differ from those on most maps. Please follow our directions.