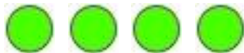


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Pentewan to Black Head

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Pentewan – Free car park (SX 018423)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 105 – Falmouth and Mevagissey
Distance	8.9 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk from Pentewan, near St Austell starts off along the Pentewan Valley Trail, alongside the St Austell River. The trail is the bed of the former Pentewan Railway, constructed to bring clay and tin to Pentewan from where it was shipped. The old silted up harbour is still there which is interesting.

The trail passes through ancient woodland which is home to a wide variety of trees, wild flowers, animals and rare butterflies.

The climb out of the woods gives good views over St Austell. Porthpean beach is a lovely stretch of sand. There are public toilets here and a café may be open at peak times although it was closed when I passed on a June Saturday (maybe due to inclement weather!) and a picnic table as you leave the hamlet.

After an attractive cliff top walk, we end back at Pentewan, an attractive village dating back to medieval times with huge swathes of sand. There is a huge holiday park which does not detract from the attractiveness as much as you might think. There are shops and The Ship Inn which makes a pleasant end to the walk.

There is a free car park at Pentewan. To get there, take the B3273 south off the A390 from St Austell. Turn left where indicated after about 3 miles. The car park is just over the narrow bridge.

Please note that large sections of this walk are under a tree canopy and so GPS readings are unreliable.

Start: Turn left on leaving the car park at Pentewan (SX 018423) and after crossing the narrow bridge, turn right to follow the Pentewan Valley trail. After passing the cycle hire hut and information board, ignore the little path off to the left and keep on the main track.

On reaching a broad track with a two way fingerpost marking directions of the Pentewan Valley Trail, turn right, following the track by the river (SX 009480). There is a higher level narrow path but it does not matter which you use.

Pass a caravan and camping site on the other side of the river and a footbridge leading into it (do not cross it). There is a very fancy fingerpost here – see photo.

Pass a stone bridge over the river and a car park but stay on the Pentewan Valley Trail.

Pass an information board for Kings Wood. I suspect by staying on the main track, you will end up at the bridge referred to below at # but I opted to go via the woods by taking the track going off to the right, immediately after the information board (SX 007489). When the track splits by a post with an oak leaf symbol, turn left.

There are a number of tracks leading off here and there but ignore these, staying on the main track, which starts to follow a small stream. Stay on the right hand bank.

You reach a broad track by a bridge (# referred to above) (SX 008493). Turn right.

You will come across various signs indicating Kings Wood which can be quite confusing so do not take undue notice of these. Having said that, at a three-way fingerpost by a road, turn right signed for King's Wood.

You come to a rough car parking area. Take the ridged concrete lane rising into the woods. This is an old sunken lane to East and West Towan Farms but looks little used. Stay on this lane ignoring turns off on the first bend.

As you get towards the top of the lane, the view to the left opens out to give a vista over towards the "Cornish Alps" – spoil heaps from the clay production industry.

The lane joins a broad track going into a field on the right but you turn left. Stay on the track between the farm buildings and keep a look out for Towan Farm Cottage on the left, just before a barn. Turn left here between the barn and the cottage (SX 015492).

Go through the gate and turn right passing behind the barn but start to bear left towards a pair of old gateposts next to a power pole. From these gateposts, walk along to the right of the line of trees which become an old field boundary wall which leads to a stile in the corner.

Once over this somewhat precarious stile, head towards the middle of the opposite left hand boundary of the next field, next to another power pole. Here is a kissing gate and once through this, head uphill for the diagonally opposite corner of the field.

Turn right through the gateway and pass in front of Menagwins farmhouse and turn left to follow the farm drive (SX 016501). Stay on the drive as it "zigs" to the left and "zags" to the right, then shortly after it bends again to the left, take the track to the right for Roseweek Farm (SX 015505). Pass the farm then go left just before a house named Cowslip.

The track bends left passing through woodland. Remain on it until you pass gates either side, going into the golf course. Turn right shortly after these gates following the public bridleway fingerpost. There is also a sign for Park Matthews Cottage (SX 023508).

Pass the cottage and take the footpath straight ahead. When this divides in front of hospital buildings, take the right fork (SX 027511). At the road, go straight ahead on the road to Lower Porthpean. As the road bends sharp right, take the little footpath straight ahead alongside the electricity sub-station.

At the junction with the coastal footpath at SX 033509, turn right. Almost immediately, you pass a lookout post on the left, which is worth climbing for the view of the beach.

Continue following the coast footpath along the "prom" behind the beach and up the road. At the bend, turn left following the fingerpost for "Coast Path and Public Footpath Trenarren 1¼ miles". There is a picnic table and bench here.

The footpath comes out on the road above Trenarren. Go briefly left then, when the road bends right at a no through road sign, go left indicated by a footpath marker.

A few yards further on, a post indicates the coast path goes off to the left but stay on the track straight ahead. When the track forks, take the right fork for "Coast Link".

At a crossroads of tracks with several blue arrows, keep straight ahead for Black Head, the site of an ancient promontory fort. Unfortunately, the weather was inclement at the time of my visit so I was unable to enjoy the views from here which I understand are very good.

From Black Head, retrace your steps to this crossroads and turn left (this is an easier track than the one which indicates the bridleway runs out)

When you get to the road which is the access road to the coastal properties, turn left and at the bottom turn right on to a public bridleway "Coast Path (Hallane) ¼ mile". When the bridleway divides with coast path arrows in both directions, fork right.

Cross a stile next to a gate for Hallane Mill. At the mill, (SX 033483) turn right.

As the path climbs, turn left over a bridge (SX 033482). Later cross another footbridge at SX 030480 (Vans West).

As you get closer to Pentewean, the path runs next to the dangerous and steep Polrudden Cliffs so take care!

The path joins another just above Pentewan village. Turn right. Pass in front of some attractive white painted cottages with verandas and at the road, turn left into the village.

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