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St. Anthony Head Walk (Roseland Peninsula)

Starting point and OS Grid reference	Porth Farm car park (honesty box) (SW 868330)
Ordnance Survey map	OS Explorer 105 – Falmouth and Mevagissey
Distance	5.5 miles
Traffic light rating	

Introduction: This walk to St Anthony Head on the Roseland Peninsula has to be one of the prettiest walks in Cornwall. It is also very easy with virtually no gradients.

Similar to the St Just to St Mawes walk, if you rely on a 1:25000 scale map to plan your walks, in the absence of crisp eyesight or a magnifying glass, you would be forgiven for thinking that the last stretch of this walk after St. Anthony's Church was not possible. However there are clear, well walked paths and good signposting.

The walk includes three lovely beaches and lots of interest.

At St. Anthony Head is The St. Anthony Battery – the remains of a gun emplacement built in the late 19th century and which was operational until 1956, protecting the port of Falmouth from invaders in conjunction with fortifications at Pendennis Castle and St Mawes. In 1956, the National Trust took over the property. It is free to look round and there are toilets.

Also worth visiting on the site is the Battery Observation Post built in the Second World War. This doubles as a bird hide and there is a frieze identifying various visible landmarks.

On the top of the cliffs immediately above the battery is an orientation table. There are some scenically positioned benches which make good picnic spots.

Downhill from the battery is St Anthony octagonal lighthouse built in 1835 to warn ships off the Manacles Reef.

The stretch of the walk along the Percuil River overlooking St Mawes with many moored boats is especially attractive.

The walk starts at the National Trust car park at Porth Farm. To get there, turn off the A3078 at Trewithian signposted for Portscatho. Stay on this road, avoiding the turn offs for Portscatho itself. Ignore the right fork for Percuil and not far after joining the side of the creek, the car park is on the right.

Start: From the car park (SW 868330), cross the road and into the farmyard. There is a National Trust sign indicating Towan Beach. Bear left and actually go through the archway through the barn.

Unless you actually want to go on to the beach, divert to the right, away from the most worn track, after going through the arch and join the coastal path at the cliff edge. Turn right. Few instructions are really necessary as you simply follow the coast path.

You soon come to the "The Wreck Post". This was erected by the coastguard service to simulate a ship's mast to enable breeches buoy practice.

At a marker post by a bench, showing the coastal path straight on and another footpath to the right, there is a little track to the left which goes down to Porthbeor Beach, should you wish to visit it.

You pass the end of some broad grassy tracks on the right but ignore these and stay on the coastal path (1st one at SW 850312).

At SW 848312 you reach the St Anthony B2 Gun Pit.

After looking round the old military installation, make your way along the tarmac track/road towards the car park but take the path down to the left towards the lighthouse. The immaculately kept lighthouse is worth a look but also down this path at the bottom, off to the right, is the continuation of the coast path. Just before this is a left turn to the Battery Observation Post.

Return to and continue along the coast path, passing the white painted old paraffin store for the lighthouse. The path joins another, half way down a flight of steps (SW 847315). Turn left and cross the footbridge by a lovely beach.

The circular configurations of St Mawes Castle, built by Henry VIII, is clearly visible across the water.

Follow the headland round passed Carricknath Point and as you get more or less opposite the little harbour of St Mawes (SW 849324), the path forks off to the right cutting off a corner - if you carry on as far as the trees (a nature reserve), there is a fingerpost to the right for "St Anthony's Church ½ mile" and "Place Quay ¾ mile".

At the top of the slope, through a kissing gate, a yellow footpath arrow indicates your route which joins the drive to Cellars Cottage. Turn right.

Fork right at a fingerpost for "Coast Path Public Footpath Church and Place Quay ½ mile".

At SW 854320, the coast path forks left. You turn right at the church but please have a look round it first as it is quite unusual for such a tiny place.

When you reach the road, turn left and walk down to the quay. This is used by the ferry to St Mawes at high tide. At the head of the quay is a kissing gate on the right. Go through this and turn sharp left to follow the fingerpost for "Porth Farm 1½ miles".

You soon pass a pontoon which the ferry uses at low tide and enter (National Trust) Drawlers Plantation. There is also a sign for "Porth Farm via Porthcuel River".

At SW 859330 ignore the first path to the right for Bohortha and another further on.

The footpath crosses the creek, not far before Porth Farm (at which point it is little more than a muddy stream) via a long footbridge (SW 868 29). Turn right after crossing and turn right on the footpath parallel with the road back to the car park.

