

walks 8 and 9

Trelissick

A gentleman's estate beside the Fal

Roundwood

Lazy creeks and an ancient fort

compiled by Phil Allen



Route for walk 8: Trelissick Gardens National Trust Car Park, Channals Creek, King Harry Ferry, Lamouth Creek, The Old Lodge, Trelissick car park.

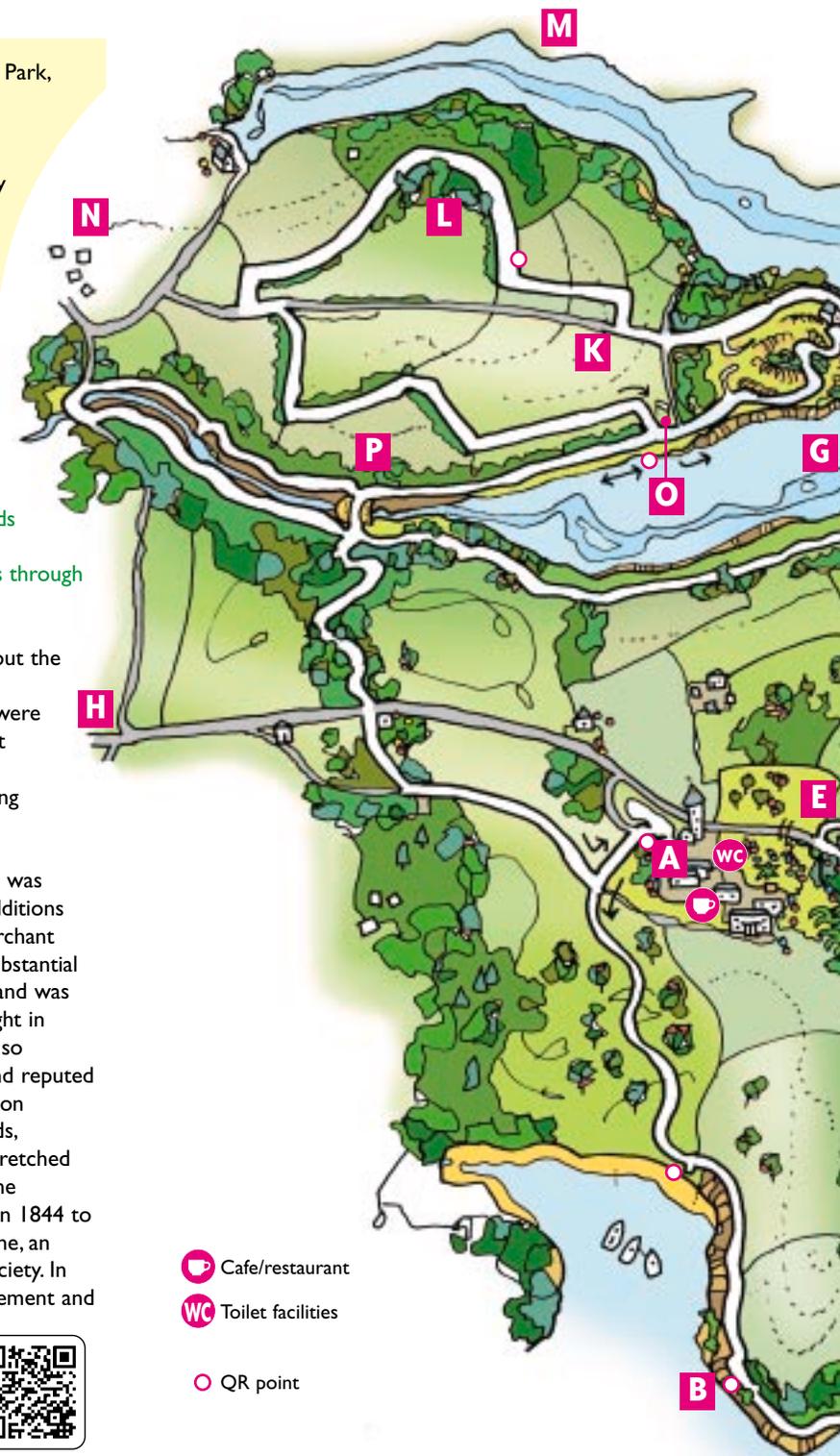
The walk is almost wholly on land administered by the National Trust and the paths are permissive rather than by right. All paths are in good order, although the first part over a pasture field can be slippery if wet. There are no stiles. The walk is 1.5 to 2 hours long.

The woodland walk starts at the National Trust car park at Trelissick **A**, for which there is a parking charge to non-members. Standing by the information rotunda at the car park entrance you will see, across the way, a map showing this woodland walk.

Take the tarmac track across the cattle grid and out into the pasture field to follow one of the routes down towards the estuary that you will see in the distance. As you walk down the hill keep the metal fencing on your left and pass through the pedestrian gate near the bottom.

The setting for this walk reflects themes echoed throughout the Parish. The house and gardens were largely built with the proceeds from Cornish mining in its heyday. The gardens were also a product of the age of discovery when Cornish plant hunters scoured the world for riches, as did their mining cousins. All this is set within a maritime backdrop, marrying industrial heritage with modern leisure activities.

At present, it is not known when the first Trelissick house was built: however the one seen today is 18th century, with additions made throughout the 19th century. Around 1750 the merchant Edward Lawrance and his son John established the first substantial dwelling on land, which was part of the manor of Trevilla and was leased from the Trefusis family. The whole estate was bought in 1813 by Ralph Allen Daniell, who borrowed money to do so despite being heir to Thomas "guinea-a-minute" Daniell and reputed to be the richest man in Cornwall. On Ralph's death, his son Thomas inherited and developed the property and grounds, including adding the portico, however his finances were stretched and, having become indebted to Lord Falmouth, in 1832 the property transferred to the Boscawens. It was sold again in 1844 to John Davies Gilbert, son of Mary Ann Gilbert of Eastbourne, an agronomist, and Davies Giddy a president of the Royal Society. In that position Davies Giddy had given consistent encouragement and financial support to young scientists and inventors, particularly his fellow Cornishmen Richard Trevithick and Sir Humphry Davy.



Captain Morcom shows Thomas Daniell some ore from his mines.



Photograph courtesy of the RIC



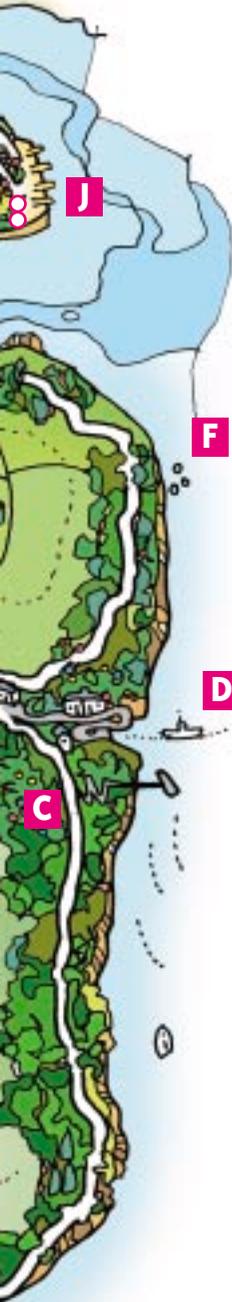
Photograph by Phil Allen



An oyster dredger returning home



Photograph courtesy of the Cornish Studies Library



The house became an important social venue in the area and the first Feock regatta was run from the grounds on Tuesday 7th Sept in 1858. Regattas had previously been held at Devoran but as the Hon Mrs Gilbert had thrown open her grounds at Trelissick for the Exhibition of the Royal Horticultural Society it was decided by the committee to hold the regatta on the same day. A passion for great gardens and sailing often went together at the time and the two activities continue to shape our Parish.



Photograph by Phil Allen

Yachts racing in the Falmouth Classics regatta 2016



At the bottom of the hill, just above the beach, turn left to pass through another pedestrian gate and follow the path through the woods which border the estuary shoreline **F**.

As you glimpse the visitor pontoons in the fairway you will understand why the river is such a haven for craft of all sizes and you may also be fortunate enough to see an oyster dredging boat returning from work.

Carry along through the woods keeping the river in view and walking towards the King Harry Ferry which you may hear in the distance. As you near the ferry you will pass the zig-zag path **G** leading down to the Fal River Link pontoon, one stop among the list of ferry and bus routes within and around the estuary. Carry on along the main path and descend the steps onto the King Harry Ferry Road. Cross this road and climb the steps on the far side **H**.

The River Fal has always been an important transport route and many ferries survived into the 20th century. The Malpas ferry is mentioned in stories as far back as the 6th century and Harry's ferry is likely to be no less ancient. The current name is thought to refer to Henry VI rather than the more famous Henry VIII. In common with

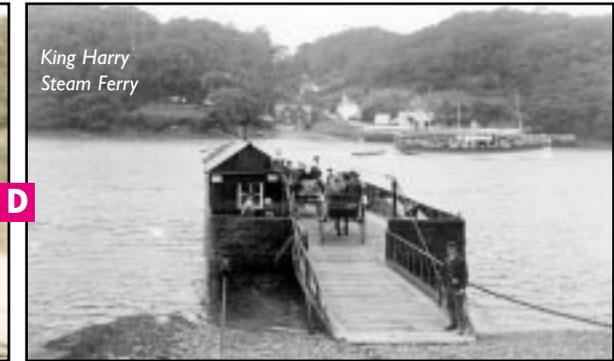
others the King Harry Ferry was originally powered by oars, however its importance warranted a better system and in 1889 steam was introduced.

Continue to follow the woodland track which borders the estuary.

Upstream of the ferry in days past you would have seen a community of laid up shipping moored within the fairway reach. During much of the 20th century the area provided a good barometer of the world economy; when trade was depressed many ships were laid up and



King Harry Ferry in the days before steam



King Harry Steam Ferry

Photographs courtesy of the Cornish Studies Library

they returned to sea as work picked up **I**. Nowadays the increased size of shipping has made this cramped anchorage less popular and Truro Harbour is now having to look for new financial opportunities.

As you reach the moorings the shoreline leads round to the left and into Lamouth Creek **C**.

A little further on, as you look across the water, you will see the quays and promontory fort of Roundwood. It is difficult to imagine a more perfect spot for a fortified shoreline port and this, together with its connection to St Kea and the tales of Tristan and Iseult, is explored in walk 9.

At the head of the creek, before the footbridge seen ahead on your right, turn left to climb the hill back to Trelissick. Towards the top of the hill a bench seat provides both a welcome breather and also long views towards Lord Falmouth's mansion of Tregothnan. At the top of the track pass through the gate and cross the main road. Take care as traffic to and from the ferry can be busy at times. Follow the route directly ahead and, ignoring paths to left and right, carry on to the tarmac estate road, at which you turn left.

Carry on over the cattle grid to return to the Trelissick car park.

Route for walk 9: Roundwood Quay National Trust car park, Kestle Hill, Lamouth Creek, Roundwood Quay.

The majority of the walk is on land administered by the National Trust and the paths are permissive rather than by right. The Trust must be congratulated in providing access to such a truly wonderful area which is a delight for those of all ages blessed with imagination. The walk has many wide paths and stretches of fields down to grass. It has one stile and a section of steps. An optional route through the woods can be very muddy and slippery after prolonged rain. The walk is 1 - 2 hours long depending on whether a full or shorter route is taken.

The walk starts at the car park at Roundwood Quay, owned by the National Trust. The unmade track leading to the quay is very rough and not suitable for vehicles without good clearance. An alternative foot access from the King Harry Ferry road is described later.*

The ancient fort lies in the woods above the quays and is thought to have been first constructed about three hundred and fifty years BC by Celtic speaking people. At this time, all around Cornwall, a surprising number of hill forts and cliff castles were being built. The site has not been excavated to establish a full history, however the inner defences may have been constructed later, perhaps into Britain's Roman period. In light of its position, situated as it is on the Fal a principal pathway linking Cornwall with its sister provinces of Brittany and Wales and onwards to Ireland, it would be difficult to imagine a more perfect site for a fortified merchant trading emporium.

Many Cornish legends of the 6th century are centred on the River Fal. The area around Roundwood is closely linked with those of the Celtic Saint Kea and the timeless romance of Tristan and Iseult, which both describe the lands and forests bordering the river. Both of these stories were later entwined with legends of King Arthur and also taken up in the Cornish language texts of Beunans Meriasek and Bewnans Ké under the tradition of the miracle plays of Glasney College. The surrounding area can rightly claim to be the cradle of such Cornish romance.

The quays at Roundwood were probably built by Thomas Daniell around 1760, at the same time as those of Pill and Point. Their principal purpose was to service the tin and copper mines of Kea and Gwennap with coal and exported ore, however for a period in the 1770s the quay area was also home to a copper smelting operation. The traffic overland comprised the ubiquitous mule train, but this declined following the commissioning in 1826 of the

Redruth and Chasewater Railway, with its connections to ports at Devoran and Point. Later in the 19th and early 20th centuries the quay continued as both a thriving shipyard and coal-yard.

The walk starts from the quay **1**, (having parked taking care not to block in any cars or boats). Retrace your arrival route through the entrance gate and carry on up the lane passing the cottages on your left. The tall trees high on your left are growing on the site of the iron age fort which you can explore on your return route. As the wooded grounds of the fort end you will pass a gap on your left containing a massive granite post and leading into an open field. Do not turn off but continue up the hill along the main track for another fifty yards and take the field entrance on the right beside the large oak tree **2**. Follow the left hand hedge up the field and, remaining in this field, turn right at the top to keep this hedge on your left.



Tristan and Iseult in the classical romantic tradition - as depicted by Edmund Blair Leighton (1853–1922).

The hedge encircles Kestle Hill **3**, thought to contain another very significant 'Round' or enclosed settlement, probably dating from the Bronze Age some 3,000 years ago.

Carry along the top of the field with the hedge to your left and pass through the gap. Continue on the path at the top of the fields passing an old cattle trough.



Photograph courtesy of the Cornish Studies Library

You will see in the valley below, along the creekside, the hamlets of Coombe and Cowlands with their many fruit orchards. This is the home of the famous Kea plum **4**. The area was a hive of activity in the 19th and early 20th centuries when, during harvest time in August and September, it was a magnet for pickers who even came by steamer boat from Truro and other Fal ports to take a share of the bounty. The harvesting of Kea plums was initiated by shaking the trees to drop their fruit rather than picking. Shaking began at eight in the morning with picking going on until five in the afternoon. The fruit was stored in baskets lined with fern for transit far and wide.

The field path becomes a green lane between tall hedges and as you emerge from this, on the right in the middle distance, you will notice Tregew Farm. **5**

The name may either mean 'farmhouse on good land' or possibly, 'farmhouse of the spear' a reference perhaps to Roundwood Fort. The farmstead is one of the oldest in the parish recorded at least since early 14th century. In later periods it became a gentleman's residence even described as a mansion house.

The lane exits via a gate onto the main Roundwood track; turn left and take the field gate ten yards along on the right hand side. Follow the right hand hedge of the field and go through the gap at the bottom, immediately turning left to follow the upper hedge of this bottom field. In the distance you may catch glimpses of the River Fal at Tolverne. When reaching the far hedge, follow it down the hill until you find the gateway on your left which you pass through, this time following the right hand hedge to continue downhill.



Photograph courtesy of the Art Renewal Center

At the bottom of the field turn left and follow the hedge which you keep to your right. You will see in the distance the signs which form a National Trust information board .

You are now at the half way point of the walk and, dropping down to the creekside path, you can decide either to take the longer route, to your right, up to the head of Lamouth Creek and through Namphillow and Lambsclose woods , or take the shorter route to your left which leads through the fort and back to the quay . I can assure you that if you choose to take the longer creek and woodland walk you will not be disappointed.

Longer route:

To take the creek and woodland route turn right along the creekside path.



above, Kea Blues below



Photograph by Jane Verran

Photographs by Phil Allen

This lane is part of the ancient traveller route bordering the western banks of the River Fal which provided the shortest distance travelling from Tresillian Bridge to Penryn. The route up the hill to your left led to Trevilla and Feock and then onwards, via Restronguet Passage, to Mylor and Penryn. On the right it led through Cowlands and Old Kea and onwards to the three way ferry at Malpas. The route linked with the other ferries at King Harry and Tolverne.

The route up Wrinkling Lane to your left leads to the King Harry Ferry main road where there is a lay-by , * **this could be an alternative starting point for this walk.**

Turn right on Wrinkling Lane to cross the stream and take the stile immediately on your right. The woodland path above the stream is somewhat more adventurous than that you have just walked. It is narrow and can be extremely wet and slippery after heavy rain. Keep to the path which leads beside the stream and soon brings you back to the main path at the lower bridge you passed earlier .

Retracing your earlier steps, follow the path in order to return to the information board and follow the directions for the shorter route, back to Roundwood Quay and your start point.

The woodland has a wide mix of trees with some magnificent oak and beech. In spring it is home to primroses and bluebells and the melodious song of the blackbird.

Sudden movements may reveal a tree creeper or one of the tit family. The quay itself provides a rare open view of the River Fal as it pushes deep into the Cornish countryside. On the water around and about you may see some of the birds that use the mudflats and river edges to feed. Herons fly silently past and little egrets, blacktailed

godwits and oystercatchers can usually be heard if not seen. The autumn and winter months are the best time to see the birds of the Fal, but herring gulls and majestic mute swans can be seen at most times of the year. Binoculars and a small bird guide for identification are useful and if you are very lucky you may see an elusive kingfisher.

Shorter route:

Passing the information board again on your left, carry straight on into the Roundwood Fort, where you take the right hand fork to walk through the first defensive trench and rampart.

Continue along the path through the woods and when you reach the next inner rampart of the settlement leave this to your left, skirting around the outer pathway, eventually taking the steps back down to the Car Park. If you have time you might explore the inner fort, finding your way along one of the many paths back to the quay.

The earliest surviving versions of the story of Tristan and Iseult were written independently around 1155 AD by two Gaulish poets, Beroul and Thomas (the Briton). They tell of Tristan, the orphaned son of Rivalen, a lord of Brittany, and Blanchfleur, sister of King Mark of Cornwall. Tristan was brought up in Brittany but as a young man found his way to Cornwall and was soon a favourite of King Mark at his court.

As he grew Tristan became a champion of Cornwall and was sent to Ireland to win for Mark the hand in marriage of the beautiful Princess Iseult. He was successful but on the return journey a mix up involving magic potion led to the two falling in love. The tragic tale unfolds by matching themes of love and constancy with darker plots of deception and treachery. Richard Wagner's opera Tristan and Isolde is perhaps the most famous version and is reputed to be one of the most influential pieces of music of all time.

The Cornish 'Miracle Play' Bewnans Ké was discovered in 2000 and is lodged with the National Library of Wales. It was probably written around 1500 AD at Glasney College in Penryn and tells the story of St Kea, including his founding of the early monastery of Landighe at Old Kea Churchtown nearby.



This walk leaflet was produced by Feock Parish Council with the support of the Heritage Lottery Fund. Design and illustration by graeme@graemerust.com



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