

Porthtowan, Banns Vale, Mount Hawke and Chapel Porth

This is a walk of extremes. Porthtowan ('porth' meaning 'landing place' and 'towan' denotes 'sand dunes'), where the walk begins, is very popular in the summer as it offers surfing, a level beach and all the necessary shops, post office and eating establishments for an enjoyable visit. As you go inland you will see the remains of engine houses, stacks and waste piles. Then, very shortly you will be walking in a tranquil valley known as 'parc shady'. Further on you will walk through the hamlet of Mongoose and take the beautiful walk down Chapel Coombe and then return to your starting point along the coastal path with long distant views to Godrevy Point and St. Ives.

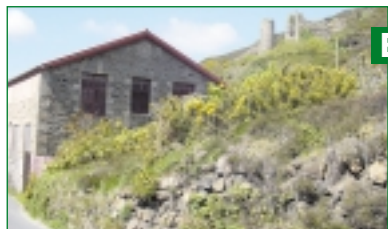




A

Start the walk at Porthtownan Car Park. With your back to the sea, walk past the large building on the left of the road, which is the Village Hall, opened in July 2000 and a great asset to the village. You will approach a bridge on the left, go over this and turn right (this saves walking along the main road into Porthtownan which is narrow and can be busy). Pass the properties on the right and continue straight ahead along a narrow path that will bring you to the side of Peter Johns Garage with the Avalon

Restaurant opposite. Turn right then immediately left which is signposted Scorrier, Redruth, Truro. You are now walking along the valley with the stream on the right. You will see the stack of an old mine building on the left. This is the relic of the Echo Corner **A** shaft of South Wheal Towan. This was a copper mine and the stones from South Wheal Towan can be seen at the entrance of the St. Agnes Museum.



B

c.1906



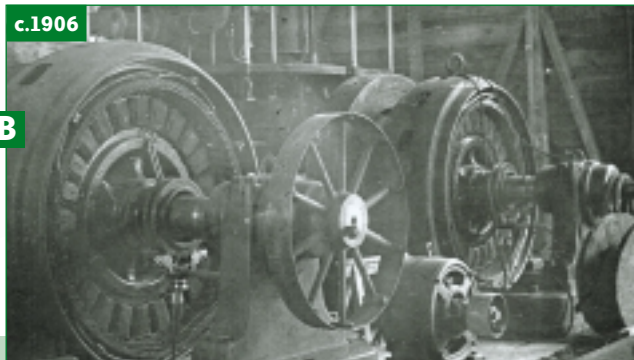
B

c.1906



B

c.1906

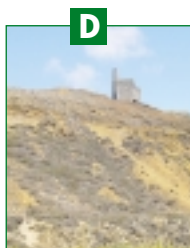
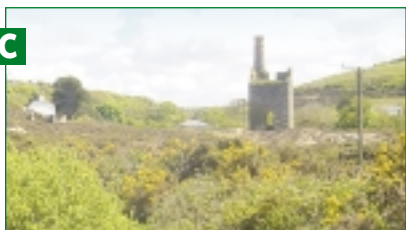


B

**COBHWALD FIRST ELECTRIC PUMP
LYWARRHALL MINE**

Continue walking along the road. On the hillside to the left are the remains of an old Tywarnhayle mine engine house at Taylors Shaft. In 1906, a company was formed with the intention of working the surface dumps and draining the mine to the 40 fathom level in order to work the remaining ore in the higher stopes. This company operated under the Tywarnhayle name and substantial capital was invested getting the mine into working order. Unfortunately, after a short period, operations were closed as it had failed to show signs of becoming economically viable. This brief working was an important milestone in mining as de-watering was carried out by the first electrically driven centrifugal pumping system in Cornwall. Taylor's shaft was selected for the site of the pump and electricity was generated in a large stone building by the roadside below the shaft. The pump, built by Worthington and Co, was guaranteed to lift 1,000 gallons per minute.

Continue walking along the valley passing many interesting sites on the left including the Power House B, until the road bears off to the right. At this point look to your right where you will see Wheal Ellen standing like a small castle guarding the Porthtowan valley C. This copper mine worked mainly between 1826 - 1862 producing copper ore. Some older structures, such as wheelpits, are close by.



Turn left onto an unmade track and after about 50 metres the lane divides; keep to the right hand lane. Before you go any further, a little history about Tywarnhayle Mine D, which is to your left up at the top. This mine has a chequered history, being at its most prosperous in the late 1830s and, in the period 1826-52, 68,000 tons of copper ore were raised. It then went through a difficult time but was reopened in 1906 when a Power House was erected using coal from Portreath to manufacture gas to power the generators, but the Company went into liquidation in 1907. Since 1908, apart from a period during the Second World War, Tywarnhayle was used for training mining students. *It is possible to visit the engine house, but the path is steep and overgrown, so we will continue our walk!!*

Continuing the walk on the lower right hand lane, you will pass a water treatment works on the right. You will then reach an open grass area with a stream which you will have to cross, but be careful as the stepping stones can be slippery .



Turn left where the path continues by the stream along a tranquil, beautiful bridleway known as Parc Shady E. As it is a bridleway it can be muddy. As the trees ahead appear to thin out leading to cultivated land which is Banns Farm, on the right there is a small tunnel with water emerging F, which is reported to be an adit (drainage channel) belonging to a small mine called Wheal Banns. *The ribbons and personal effects strung here are gifts to spirits, the more personal the token to the wisher the more potent the wish. in return for which a wish comes true when the gift returns to nature.*

Shortly after, the path branches, take the left hand fork and you will reach the road where you turn left, it does mean you now have about half a mile road walking, but on a quiet road.

G



I

This area is Banns Vale, the meaning of Banns is 'hollow' and you can understand this as you walk up the hill. You get a clear view of St.Agnes Beacon [G](#) in front of you with the engine house of Wheal Coates on the skyline [H](#) to the left and if you turn round you will see Carn Brea [I](#).

H



When you reach the road (*be very careful as this is busy*) cross over and take the lane opposite. Walk down this lane keeping to the right of two cottages until you reach another

stream which you need to cross and then climb over a stile. Turn right and walk round the edge of the field until you see a stile in the hedge on the right. Go over this and then keep near the hedge on your left until you reach another stile; cross this and you are now on a tarmac road. Turn left and continue until you reach a junction with a converted Chapel facing you. Turn left and walk down the road through the hamlet of Mongoose [J](#). This means 'edge of the wood' and you will pass old cottages on your left, one of which was The Miners Arms but hasn't served a pint since about 1800!!

A few yards on we take the public footpath signposted on the right. We are now in Chapel Coombe which is a quiet and gently sloping path, but there is evidence of mining with many shafts and there are warning posts all around indicating spoil heaps on the hilltop. After you have passed the pumping house of Charlotte United continue towards the sea until you reach the wide coastal path on the left. *If at this stage you are feeling a little thirsty or peckish or need a 'comfort stop' continue down to Chapel Porth [K](#) where you will usually find these facilities (somewhat improved since 1927); it is also a lovely spot to stop for a 'breather'. But it now means you must retrace your steps back up to the path.*

c.1925

J



c.1927

K



This wide track was built by American servicemen in June 1944 with a wooden bridge over the stream at the bottom.

Great Wheal Charlotte **L** was once an important copper producing mine and was opened (or reopened) in 1820 and rich copper ore found. It is believed to have ceased working in the mid 1800s. The one wall remaining is the large 'bob wall', on this wall the large metal bob (or beam) pivoted. The inside end was connected to a 60 inch engine and the outside end to the wooden pump rod that went down the shaft to pump the mine dry. It is worth taking the detour on the left to see it closely before returning to the coast path. As you are returning to Porthtowan do look directly ahead and on a clear day you will see Godrevy Point and St. Ives. *Somewhat nearer, you have a view of Porthtowan beach itself, it was here in 1998*

that a 700lb leatherback turtle was found. The leatherback is an endangered species which feeds mainly on jellyfish, this one later died, as it had mistakenly swallowed a discarded plastic bag, it was believed to have been about 80 years old and is now preserved in the St Agnes Museum.



c.1910

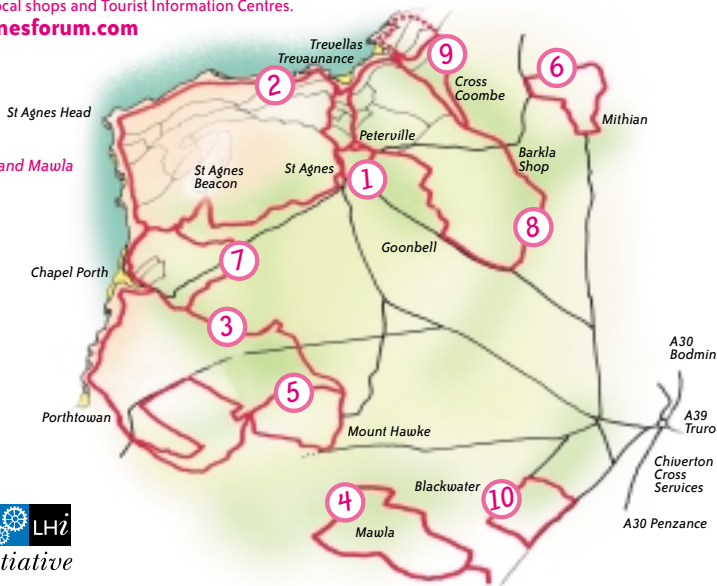


Continue to follow the coast path, which leads you back over the hill above Porthtowan **M** to your start but do watch your step as it can be rather rough in places.

This map is one of a series available from local shops and Tourist Information Centres.

For further information visit www.stagnesforum.com

- Walk 1 St Agnes Village Trail
- Walk 2 St Agnes Beacon
- Walk 3 Porthtowan, Banns Vale, Mount Hawke and Chapel Porth
- Walk 4 Wheal Rose, the Poldice Plateway and Mawla
- Walk 5 Mount Hawke
- Walk 6 Mithian Walk
- Walk 7 Wheal Coates, Chapel Porth and Wheal Lawrence Valley
- Walk 8 Water Lane, Wheal Butson and Jericho Valley
- Walk 9 Jericho Valley and Cross Coombe
- Walk 10 Blackwater



St Agnes 2000
Regeneration Forum
Chairman - John Slater
Parish Rooms
St Agnes
Cornwall



Local Heritage initiative



walk number

3

ST. AGNES

HERITAGE TRAIL

Porthtowan, Banns Vale, Mount Hawke
and Chapel Porth
9km or 5½ miles

