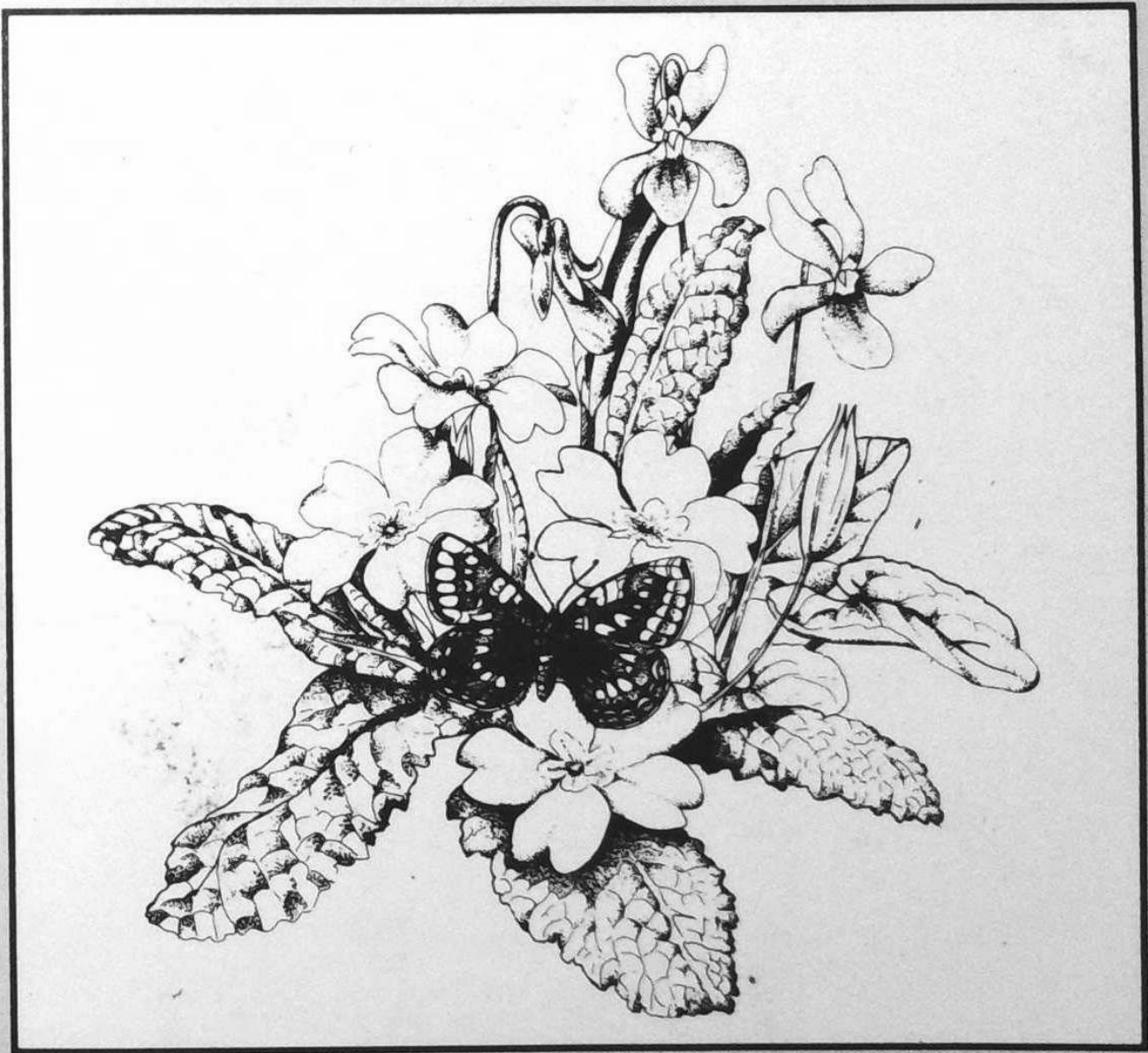


R I V E R F O W E Y D R I V E A B O U T



A Circular Drive around the River Fowey

CORNWALL · HERITAGE · PROJECT

R I V E R F O W E Y D R I V E A B O U T



Researched & written by Vicki Ferguson
Illustrations by Debbie Lee

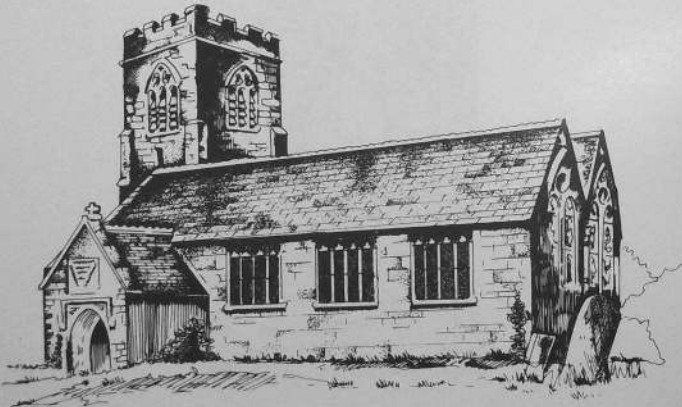
RIVER FOWEY DRIVE ABOUT INTRODUCTION

This tour of approximately 60 miles winds around the River Fowey. The river banks are wooded, the rural landscape lush. Many of the settlements have only a few buildings. Peace and tranquillity are two qualities which come to mind but this has not always been the case. During the Civil War the peninsula was witness to fierce fighting while eleven centuries earlier the love triangle of Mark, Iseult and Tristan was enacted.

THE DRIVE

The drive starts and ends in Fowey but may be joined at any point. The busy port of Fowey is not described as full details can be found in the Fowey Town Trail Walkabout, published in this series. Most of the route is on O.S. map 200 (Newquay and Bodmin) but the eastern part is on O.S. map 202 (Plymouth and Launceston) and may be useful to the visitor who wishes to by-pass some places highlighted, or explore further within the vicinity. Maps may be borrowed from any local public library.

Leave Fowey on the B3269 Bodmin road. After 3 miles turn right to Golant. Keep straight on the road towards the church, dedicated to St Sampson.



St Sampson Parish Church

ST SAMPSON CHURCH

The life story of St Sampson, a Welshman, was one of the earliest recorded in the lives of Celtic saints. Born in South Wales circa 490, he came to Cornwall en route to Brittany where he founded the monastery at Dol. It is possible that his life story was written within half a century of his death in 565, so it could be a fairly accurate record. He tarried long enough in Cornwall to found a monastery at Golant and another at Southill near Callington.

The present church was consecrated in 1509 following a request from the people of Golant who '*being merchants and artificers cannot leave their craft, boats and nets to go all the way to Tywardreath*'. St Andrew's Church at Tywardreath was the original parish church for Golant whose parishioners had already contributed towards the cost of purchasing new bells, building a new aisle and provision of a stained glass window. It was only when they refused to pay for a new Rood screen that the Bishop of Exeter consented to consecrate their own chapel and cemetery; the inhabitants to pay a tithe to the Priory of the 18th fish caught, the 18th bushel of all grain imported and the 18th barrel of all herrings landed.

The church, situated on a slope above the village, commands a view over the River Fowey. It appears to have been built of rough granite blocks. Between the two-staged tower and the south porch is a holy well and within the church, the embossed barrel roof is of particular note. The three-sided communion rail dates from the 18th century as do many of the box pews. Both the pulpit and lectern are heavily carved – descriptions of both are in the guide leaflet.

St Sampson Church cannot be left without reference to the secular story of King Mark, Tristan and Iseult. Contrary to popular belief there is evidence to suggest that Tristan was related to King Mark of Cornwall. The legend is a classic love triangle and tragedy. Tristan was sent to Ireland to escort Iseult, the future Queen, to the palace of King Mark. During the voyage the two fell in love, but Mark still claimed his bride who avowed her allegiance to her husband. Desperately unhappy, Tristan departed for Brittany where he married another Iseult. However, the love between Tristan and Queen Iseult was too strong and a plan was made such that the Queen would leave Cornwall for Brittany. It had been arranged that if the scheme was successful white sails would be hoisted, if it failed the sails were to be black.

Tristan's wife came to hear of this and one day returned to tell Tristan a ship with black sails was approaching whereupon the desolate Tristan killed himself. In fact the sails were white and, when Queen Iseult discovered her beloved dead, she also killed herself.

King Mark's castle, Lancien, is perpetuated in the old manor of Lantyan within which stood the Church of St Sampson where Mark and Queen Iseult worshipped. As part of her retribution the Queen presented her best dress to the church where it was preserved and exhibited on Feast days.

Continue down the hill to the riverside village of Golant.

GOLANT

The only true village south of Lostwithiel on the west bank of the River Fowey, Golant is but an inn, a jetty and a few cottages. About half a mile down the railway track, in a former home of the author Denys Val Baker, the Sawmills Recording Studio has been established which is rapidly achieving the reputation of being the best 'rock' music recording studio outside London. Boat building and repairs provide the industry. Mooring for boat owners is safe and access to the river is under an archway conveying the railway which links the china clay loading jetties at Carne Point, near Fowey, to Lostwithiel.

Originally the Lostwithiel to Fowey Railway was built as a mineral line, 4¾ miles long, single track, with the terminus at Carne Point. However, funds ran out and the railway was absorbed by the Cornwall Mineral Railways who extended the line to Fowey. It closed in 1880 but the Great Western Railway re-opened the line in 1895 as a freight and passenger service. Temporarily closed again in 1917 and three times during World War II, now owing to the post war boom in the use of china clay it is still in use by the English China Clay Company though it ceased to carry passengers in 1965. The line is one of the three remaining British Rail freight-only lines still operating in Cornwall, the others being the Carbis mineral branch line at Bugle and the Drinnick Mill mineral branch line from Hendra to Burngullow, which are also run by English China Clays.

The building of the railway was not without its problems as it obstructed rights over land claimed by the inhabitants of Golant for grazing. Once a year, they cut fern for firing, carrying the load on their backs as the use of either animal or cart was not permitted for that purpose by the Rashleigh family of Menabilly (see later), the owners of the freehold.

Leave Golant passing the houses up the steep hill. About ½ mile from the village is the entrance to Penquite (now a Youth Hostel) which came to prominence when General Garibaldi visited his friend, the owner Colonel Peard in 1864. Peard, known as 'Garibaldi's Englishman' was a crack rifleman who served alongside the General in the cause of Italian freedom. During the Alpine campaign of 1859 Peard was Garibaldi's constant companion-at-arms.

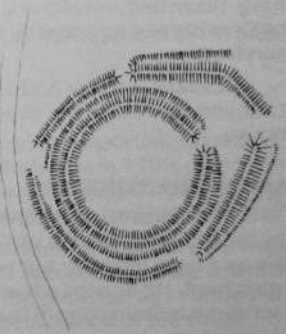
Rejoin the B3269. Turn right. Three hundred yards away, on the right, is the Iron Age ring fort, called Castle Dore.

CASTLE DORE

Originally built in about 2nd century BC, Castle Dore was also occupied in post-Roman times and has been associated with the legends of King Mark, Tristan and Iseult. During the Civil War the site played a major role in the battle for supremacy around the River Fowey.

Excavations in 1936-7 revealed that the fort was built circa 200 BC and the defences remodelled in circa 50 BC in an attempt to combat the threat of the sling. When first built, Castle Dore stood close to two important Cornish highways, the ancient coastal track linking east and west and the overland route from north to south known as the Saint's Way, as many early missionaries were reputed to have travelled this way between Ireland or Wales and France.

Abandoned during Roman times the fort was reoccupied during the 6th century and the defences were again remodelled. A series of post-holes in the inner enclosure of the fort marked out the site of a timber-built 'palace' which may have been the work of King Mark. There are indications that a palace for Mark existed in the district, but there is no conclusive evidence that this was Castle Dore.



Castle Dore

The Castle came into prominence again during the Civil War in the late summer of 1644. By August of that year the Parliamentary forces under the Earl of Essex had penetrated the peninsula taking Fowey town and harbour, and setting up headquarters at Lostwithiel.

Meanwhile, the King's Army had marched to Liskeard and set up camp on Braddock Down. This campaign was the only one in Cornwall at which Charles I was present himself. He moved his companies into Boconnoc and Lanhydrock before sending a letter to Essex suggesting that the Parliamentary Commander should defect. This opportunity was refused. All the east side of the River Fowey gradually passed into Royalists' hands, trapping Essex and his army between Lostwithiel and Fowey.

At this time Castle Dore was occupied by the Parliamentary army. A last stand was made within the castle defences in the late summer of 1644; around them was the Royal Army commanded by King Charles I himself. Essex deserted and on August 31st, Major General Skipton surrendered his 6,000 strong army to the King. Disarmed and allowed to march away they were fallen upon by Cornishmen angered by their earlier conduct and only 1,000 survived.

Continue to the A390. Turn right and then left to Lanhydrock. Follow the signs to this magnificent 17th century house.

LANHYDROCK HOUSE

The land on which the house stands was bought in 1620 by Sir Richard Robartes of Truro. Robartes began his working life as a farm labourer but became a successful tin and wool merchant. He wanted a home befitting his new status, and so set about building one of the finest houses in Cornwall.

Work began in 1630, and took twelve years to complete. The house and everything inside was designed on a grand scale – allowing descendants of the family to live in comfort and style for over 200 years. Tragedy struck in 1881 when a disastrous fire destroyed most of the house, leaving only the north wing intact. But it was rebuilt within three years, accurately copying the original style.

A tour of the house will show what life must have been like for the Robartes. All the rooms have been carefully restored after the fire, even the wallpaper, designed by William Morris, has been accurately reproduced. The hall, dining room and drawing room illustrate the quality of the workmanship and attention to detail. The Gallery, the only original part of the house, is certainly the most impressive: it is 116ft long and runs the length of the north wing. The plaster barrel ceiling is divided into 24 panels, each portraying a scene from the Old Testament. These main panels are surrounded by smaller ones filled with another series of illustrations. The work is thought to have been completed just before the Civil War in 1642. The estate was placed in the care of The National Trust in 1953, and members of the Robartes family continued to live at Lanhydrock until 1969.

Visitors can also go 'below stairs' to see the kitchens which were refurbished and enlarged after the fire.

The house and gardens are open to the public from April to the end of October, including Bank Holidays, from 11am to 6pm (Admission charge).

Return to the B3269. Turn left and left again after 1½ miles onto the B3268 to Lostwithiel.

LOSTWITHIEL

Once the capital of Cornwall and an important Stannary town Lostwithiel, granted its borough charter in 1189, stands on the River Fowey where salt and fresh water mingle. (For details of the town, see the Lostwithiel Walkabout published in this series).

Turn right just after the pedestrian traffic lights and, make for the railway station. Pass over the 15th century bridge of which the five old pointed arches remain; the parapets were added in 1676. The station is on the right. The old shed of the Great Western Railway is currently (1986) being converted into a 'Commercial Village'. It is the original building designed by Isambard Kingdom Brunel and believed to be unique in the fact that the entrance is wide enough to take the old broad-gauge railway tracks.

Continue up the hill. Turn right at Bridgend where cottages were set on fire by the vigorous cannon fire of the Parliamentary forces during the Civil War; the thatched roofs and breezy conditions ensuring a quick spread of the fire. After about two miles take the 'no through' road to St Winnow.



St Winnow Bench Ends

ST WINNOW

The hamlet of St Winnow is but a church, a farm and a few houses. The churchyard hugs the east bank of the River Fowey while the vicarage is a little way up the hill with a Tudor manor house between them. During the Civil War the manor house was occupied by Thomas Laver, MP for East Looe who was dismissed from the Commons for 'Royalism' and retained his estate only on payment of a fine of £1174 – a vast sum in the 17th century! The vicar of St Winnow was also dismissed from his living for his Royalist sympathies but lived to see the monarchy and his living restored.

The church is dedicated to St Winnow (more properly – St Winnoc) who lived after the classical Celtic 'Age of Saints' and set up an oratory here at the end of the 6th century. About the year 700, he helped found a monastery at Wormhout in Flanders (near Dunkirk). The present church is of 12th century origin but only the lower courses of the north wall and transept are of this date. Major restoration was undertaken in the late 15th century, the date of the present tower. Within, the old roof and several bench ends remain after the restoration of the building in 1874. The unpainted screen across the nave and south aisle was erected in 1907. A guide-leaflet is available.

The nearby farm houses the St Winnow Barton Farm Museum – a small but comprehensive museum of farm implements in bygone days. (Admission free)

Return to the T-junction. Turn right to Lerryn.

LERRYN

The village lies on its own creek off the River Fowey some distance from its solitary church of St Veep. Most of the traditional Cornish cottages have been renovated as has the fine millhouse. The creek, whose banks are wooded with ash, oak, elder and sycamore, is best explored by boat. The present bridge was built in 1573 after Elizabeth I issued an order to levy a rate for the erecting and re-edifying of the former decayed bridge. The two pointed arches, one larger than the other, can best be seen from the stepping stones directly below the car park.

Continue southwards up the hill to the church of St Veep.

ST VEEP CHURCH

The church, now dedicated to St Ciricus and St Julitta, is still known by the name of the saint to whom it was previously dedicated. St Veep, however, remains shrouded in mystery – it is not even certain whether the saint was man or woman. It is thought that he, or she, was martyred under the Emperor Diocletian.

The present church is of the 14th and 15th centuries, though restored in the 19th century, but with some of the older work remaining. The font dates from the 15th century and the old pews in the Lady Chapel from the 16th century. The carvings surmounting the pulpit are a later addition. The church is well-known for the quality of its bells, which are a 'virgin' peal – that is they came out of their moulds in perfect tune and have

never yet needed retuning. They were cast in 1770 by Penningtons of East Cornwall, a local bell foundry.

The route continues through Penpoll, where the Trebant Water feeds Penpoll Creek, to Bodinnick following the signs, including the one way road. At Bodinnick turn left to Hall Farm. Just beyond the entrance to the farm find a place to park near Hall Terrace and walk the 100 yards down the hill to the start of Hall Walk.

HALL WALK

Presented by Lt. Col. Peter Shakerley, Hall Walk covers the 4 mile coastal path to Polruan and has many seats upon which to rest and view the River Fowey. Two monuments have been erected. The first, a war memorial, is a granite block upon which a sword has been carved. It is in memory of those of the parishes of Lanteglos and Fowey who fell in the 1939-45 War.

A little further on, at Penleath Point, is the second granite block upon which a plaque has been placed commemorating the author Sir Arthur Quiller-Couch, who died at his home in Fowey in 1944. During his lifetime Quiller-Couch was often rowed across the river from his home to the Point where he spent many happy hours.



Memorial to Quiller-Couch



Ferryside

It was here, in 1644, that Charles I just missed an earlier decapitation than that which proved to be his fate, when a Parliamentary musket shot fired from Fowey whistled past his head.

The Walk continues through the wooded banks of the Pont Pill where Kenneth Graham gained much of his inspiration for the scenes of the 'Wind in the Willows'. Just before crossing the creek the path divides, the left-hand route leading back past the ruins of a medieval chapel and hence to the commencement of the Walk.

Drive down the steep hill to the vehicular ferry link with Fowey. Turn right up the hill out of Bodinnick from where views of the china clay loading jetties can be seen. Follow the signs to Polruan.

POLRUAN

Park in the car park overlooking the river and follow the path down into the village. Built into the hillside, facing away from the sea, the buildings huddle together in the narrow main street. Polruan is the earlier of the two settlements that guard the entrance to the River Fowey, though Fowey is now the larger. Nowadays a pedestrian ferry runs between the two, landing on the Fowey side near The White House, where Quiller-Couch lived. A great chain once stretched across the harbour mouth between the two blockhouses. The chain was used by local pirates to prevent pursuing ships from entering the harbour and arresting them. Tired of having to make restitution from customs to the Bretons and Spaniards upon whom losses had been inflicted by the piratical crews of the boats, Edward IV decided to try and restore order in the Channel. In 1474 a commission was sent to arrest all mariners, masters, pirates and victuallers of the ships of Polruan, Fowey and Bodinnick for their depredations and bring them before the King, to seize their vessels, goods and gear, and place them in custody. Some were executed and the chain removed and handed over to the rival seaport of Dartmouth. Thus ended Fowey's greatest period as a port.

At the other end of the village is Brazen Island, a small ship repair yard where a sardine factory once stood. Salmon has also played an important part in the fishing industry. On one day in July, 1873 the Polruan Salmon Seine Co. caught more than 45 fish which were sold for around one shilling a pound in the London markets.

The river was well protected by artillery during the mid-19th century. In 1860, two guns supplied by the government to Polruan Voluntary Artillery Corps were removed from the quay to St Saviour's Hill above the village. Horses were essential as the guns could fire 24 pound shot and were 10ft long and weighed over 50cwt each. The job took over two hours. Three years later two more guns were added which cross-fired with the four at Fowey.

The wooden cross fixed to the rocks at the haven mouth was called in 1535 Pontius or Pontus Cross by Leland and is still so called by the fishermen who renew it when broken by storms.

From the car park drive towards Pencarrow Head. A diversion down the road to the left leads past Essa (formerly the 13th century manor 'Ussa') To Lanteglos parish church which is set in a farmyard.

Park in the car park (charge for National Trust non-members) and follow the footpath to Pencarrow Head.

PENCARROW HEAD

This long, low projection is 447ft high with views westward to the Lizard and eastward to Bolt Tail in Devon, which are some 70 miles apart. The area is not rugged and no seabird colonies are to be found but kestrels and ravens survey the grassy slopes of tormentil, tree mallow and heather. A fine bathing beach lies beneath the west side of the Head in Lantic Bay.

Return along the road towards Polruan. At Whitecross turn right for Lanreath. After 3 miles turn right, signposted Lanreath and Farm Museum.

LANREATH

Within the village are three particular buildings worthy of a visit. The first, Lanreath Mill and Farm Museum is to the left on entering the village. There is a car park. Amongst the many exhibits is a 1924 steam roller and many old tractors. Farming and dairying equipment of bygone days are displayed and labelled. There is also a pets' corner and picnic area.

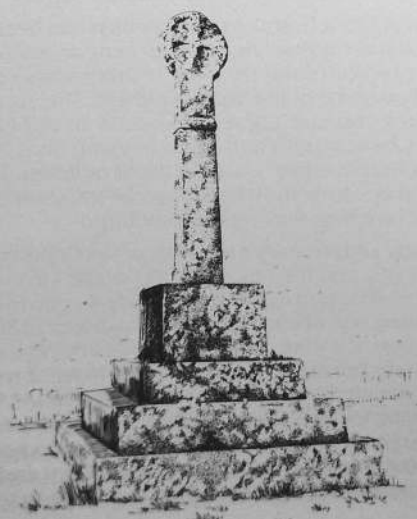
The village has a Norman church which has been restored many times but has retained much of its early characteristics. The carved rood screen dates from the 15th century and still has saints painted on some of the bottom panels. The Jacobean chancel stalls are unusual. Carved in wood is an elaborate monument to Charles Grylls and his family who lived in the 17th century manor house called 'Court', a listed building, just south of the church. It is visible from the corner of the churchyard, to the right of the porch on leaving the building.

In the early 18th century a member of the Grylls family, the Rev. Richard Grylls, and the Rev. Richard Dodge, vicar of Talland (between Looe and Polperro), were often called upon to exorcise ghosts. After many reports of villagers being driven to insanity on seeing the spectre of a man dressed in black driving a coach drawn by headless horses across Blackadon Moor (2 miles from Lanreath), the two clergymen laid in wait on the moor for the apparition to appear. Time passed, and no ghost appeared. The two decided to return to their separate parishes. Dodge was taking a short-cut home when his horse took fright and stopped and try as he might Dodge could not get the horse to move.

Taking this as a signal from Heaven too dangerous to ignore, he decided to go back the way he had come. On reaching Blackadon Moor, to his horror he saw the coach and headless horses towering above the body of Grylls. Dodge managed to say a prayer, the ghost shouted 'Dodge is come! I must be gone!' and disappeared with coach and all across the moors. Meanwhile, the rector's horse had bolted and made for the village, where the inhabitants, fearing the worst, made for the moor. There they found Grylls, quivering and talking gibberish, being supported by Dodge. Grylls regained his sanity and the ghost has never been seen since.

BOCONNOC

About 1709, the L-shaped manor house was built by Thomas Pitt, the East India merchant and Governor of Madras, shortly after he bought the original medieval house. His grandson Thomas, the first Lord Camelford (1737-1793) added the south wing. Further alterations took place in 1885. Of the medieval house a few of the doorways and windows have been incorporated into the garden walls and outbuildings.



Boconnoc Monument, Druids' Hill

The church is originally Norman and was much rebuilt in 1873 by J.P. St. Aubyn. It has no tower but a turret on the south-west end. Inside, the font has five supports - common in the 13th century - but the tracery decoration is of the 15th century.

For part of the Civil War, Boconnoc was Charles I's Headquarters. The King attended the church on 11th August, 1644 and later that month received news that the Earl of Essex had begun to withdraw from Lostwithiel.

The extensive grounds were laid out by Lord Camelford, a friend of Horace Walpole and nephew of Sir Richard Lyttelton, to whom, in 1771, was erected a 123ft high obelisk on a hill behind the house.

Continue into Lostwithiel. Turn right immediately past the 30mph sign to Restormel Castle.

RESTORMEL CASTLE (where a tourist information board about Lostwithiel has been erected)

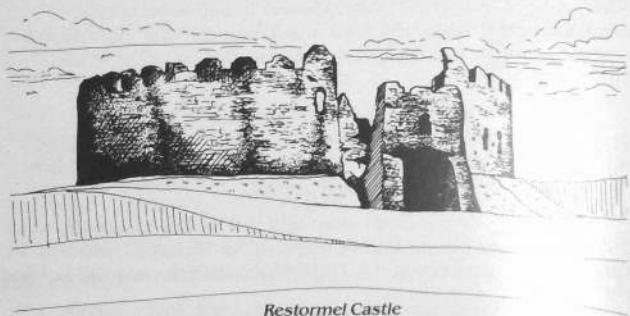
From the car park walk through the gates and across the grass which was the site of the old bailey.

The castle with its 9ft thick walls, was probably built around the year 1100 by Baldwin Fitz Turstin, sheriff of the manor of Bodardle, within whose bounds Restormel was situated. It then passed through successive generations of the Cardinham family until 1272, when the castle was granted by Isolda de Cardinham to her overlord Richard, Earl of Cornwall. It passed to his son Edward, the Black Prince, first duke of Cornwall, in 1337. It has since passed to the Monarch's eldest son and now forms part of the Duchy estates.

By the 16th century the castle was in ruins, but during the Civil War, Lord Essex garrisoned the keep in 1644 for his Parliamentary troops. Sir Richard Grenville gained one of the Royalists' successes before their final defeat by capturing the castle.

Care of the castle is now in the hands of English Heritage who have produced a guide-book. (Admission charge)

Return to the A390. Turn right and travel 3½ miles to Penpillick. Turn left to Tywardreath, following the signs to the village.



Restormel Castle

TYWARDREATH (meaning the house on the sand)

This village which has some pleasant Georgian and Victorian houses, is now 2 miles inland but was once above the beach when the sea, at high tide, reached as far as St Blazey. The thriving Cottage Garden Society, founded in 1830, is believed to be the oldest of its kind in the United Kingdom. During the reign of Henry VIII the antiquarian Leland described 'Tywardreath, a praty town, but no market, lyeth on a quarter mile from the east side of the bay. There is a Parish Church, and there was a Priory for black monks'.

The parish church, dedicated to St Andrew, still remains. It was built in 1347 on the site of the old English Abbey Church, whose foundations were discovered during restoration in the mid-19th century. The tower is untouched and the pulpit made of old carved oak panels. Little else of the early period remains. One bell, dated 1774, is inscribed 'I ring the quick to church and the dead to grave'. The Jubilee Memorial Clock of 1887 strikes the hour on this bell and rings the Westminster Chimes on four others. The war memorial in an alcove near the main entrance to the churchyard was erected in 1922. Hens from the adjoining farm roam the churchyard, helping to keep the grass down.

The Priory was founded soon after the Norman Conquest (1066) but when, and by whom, is unsure. It was a cell to the Abbey of Sancti Sergious and Bacchus of Angers, Normandy. The Priory's influence stretched as far as St Anthony-in-Meneage, south of the Helford River, and was responsible for the appointment of clergy and granting privileges for markets. Upon the Dissolution of Monasteries (1539) the Priory was demolished

and the stones shipped back to Normandy. A few relics remain – the main entrance door and carving of the Priory Arms and a small sculpture of the Virgin and Child is set into a house near the church. Several stones of unusual design can be found in the churchyard. The last prior, Thomas Colyns, died in 1539 and there is a slate memorial to him in the church.

During the mid-19th century Tywardreath developed with a large increase in the population caused by mining operations at Fowey Consols Mines, Lanescot, and the shipping development at Par.

Drive down Well Street – the site of an old Celtic holy well – past the Methodist Chapel, built in 1828 but since extended. Previously the Methodist meeting house had been at Chapeldown near Treesmill where a bungalow of that name exists on the same site. Daphne du Maurier used this area as the setting for her novel 'House on the Strand'.

At the A3082 turn left towards Fowey. The row of old Almshouses on the right were built circa 1650 by the Rashleigh family of Menabilly for seven poor widows. The modern addition on the west end was the matron's house when the cottages were temporarily used as a hospital for seamen. The buildings were restored by the Cornwall Buildings Preservation Trust in 1977.

Continue up the hill. Turn right to Polkerris and Menabilly. After ¼ mile turn right to Polkerris.

POLKERRIS

Set in a low and wide bowl of the hills, Polkerris is virtually impossible to park in during the summer, so use the car park on the hill leading into the hamlet. Until the end of the 19th century a flourishing pilchard industry existed, the Rashleigh Arms being the old pilchard palace (curing cellar). It was one of the largest on our coast. The stone jetty was built about 1735 by the Rashleighs of Menabilly, who owned the harbour and all the Gribbin peninsula, to provide shelter for the fishing fleet. However, the size of the fleet hardly justified this and the act was really only a benevolent one.

From 1859 a lifeboat was stationed at the harbour, saving 52 lives in the 43 years the station was active. For the sailing ships which loaded china clay at Charlestown, Par and Fowey the

coastline was tricky to navigate and there were many wrecks, so a lifeboat hereabouts was certainly justified. Donations by the local gentry enabled the 'Catherine Rashleigh' to be sent by train to Lostwithiel then rowed down the River Fowey and round Gribbin Head to its station. She was then shown off to the assembled crowds at Charlestown and Par.

In 1865 two rescues from ships in distress were carried out simultaneously for which the coxswain, Joshua Heath, was awarded the R.N.L.I. silver medal. Whilst on the outward trip the oars were lost; the coxswain manoeuvred the vessel to hoist the sail and steered to Par, collected more oars and returned to rescue the entire crews of each ship in turn.

With the dwindling number of horses available during the First World War, it was necessary to provide the station with pushing poles for launching. These were not satisfactory so a motor lifeboat was proposed. However, as no light carriage-borne motor lifeboat was in service, it would have been necessary to moor the vessel in open water outside Polkerris harbour. Fowey harbour was preferred and the station transferred in 1922 but only with a further pulling and sailing craft. The War had delayed the programme of development for the motor lifeboat and it was six years before such a vessel was introduced at Fowey.

Return to the T-junction. Turn right towards Menabilly. On the left is Tregaminion Church – a chapel-of-ease on the edge of the Menabilly estate. It was built in 1815 by the Rashleigh family to whom there are many memorials inside. The chapel is kept locked, but a service is held there each Sunday.

The road leads past the private estate of Menabilly. The mansion was built about 1600 by John Rashleigh, a merchant who owned a fleet of boats which fished the Newfoundland Banks for cod and selling them in the Mediterranean. The largest of these boats was only 100 tons, the smallest 30 tons, and all worked with a crew of five so it was necessary that all the men kept watch, worked the sails and fished; an amazing feat. During the Civil War, in 1644, the house and grounds were stripped and plundered by the Parliamentary troops under the Earl of Essex when they were trapped on the Gribbin peninsula.

Miles of woodland surround the mansion, which was rebuilt in 1710-15 and altered in 1821; the gardens include exotics and eucalyptus from Australia and Tasmania.

More recently Menabilly was the home of the author Daphne du Maurier who represented it as 'Manderley' in her novel 'Rebecca'.

The road ends before the headland and parking is in the field on the right. From there a footpath leads down beside a farm to Polridmouth Cove, from where one can bear left and continue on to Fowey, a beautiful and quite short walk, or bear right and walk up to the Gribbin.

THE GRIBBIN

Gribbin Head is the eastern boundary of St Austell Bay. At one time it was often mistaken by seamen for other nearby headlands, especially St Anthony (the entrance to Falmouth harbour) and the Dodman, both a few miles to the west. After the loss of three vessels in 1830 with valuable cargoes, Trinity House decided to erect a beacon tower 'for the preservation of mariners'. So the 84ft high tower was erected in 1832. Painted in red and white horizontal bands for easy recognition from the seaward side, it may come as a surprise to sailors that the landward side is all white.

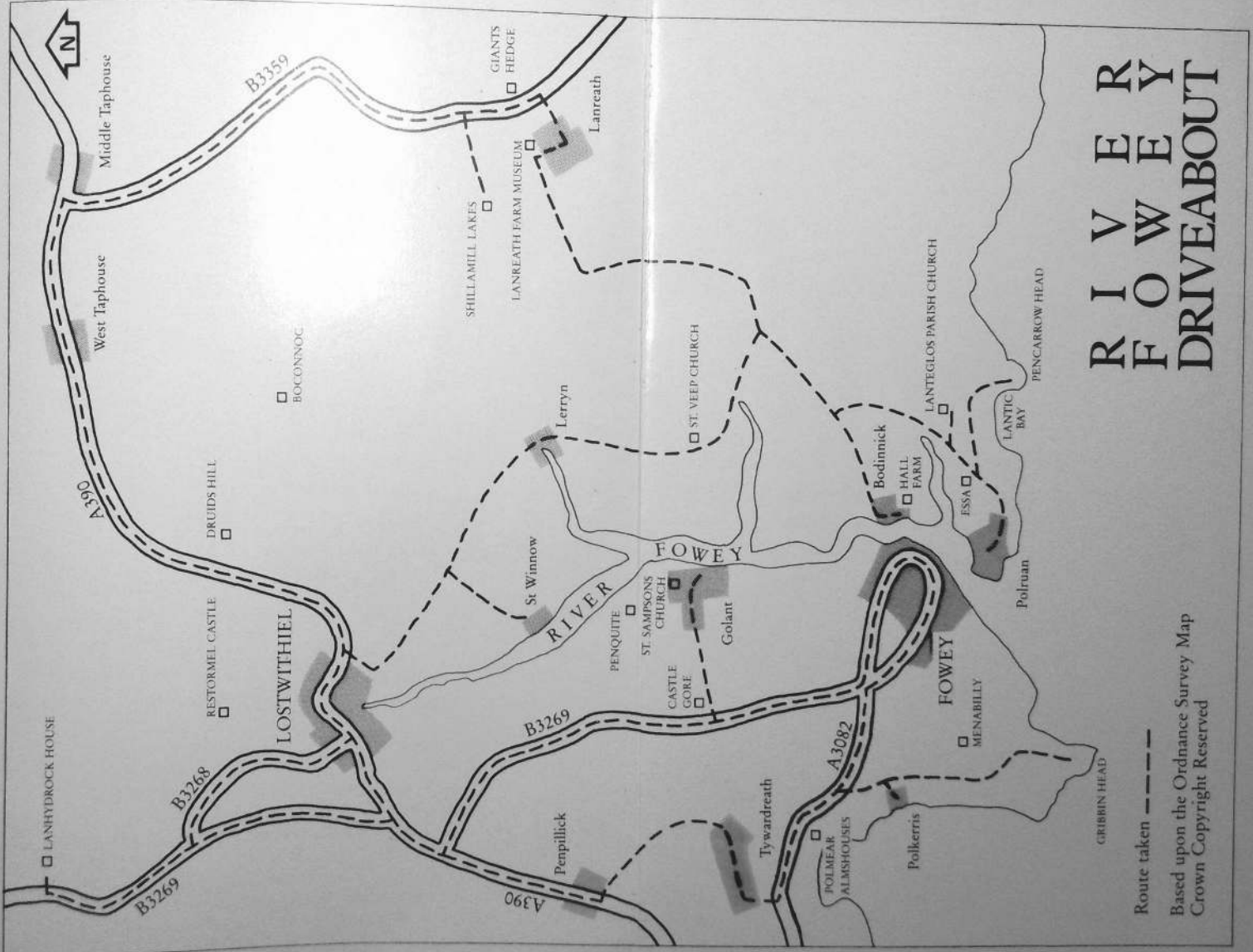
Return to the A3082. Turn right to Fowey.

Just past the roundabout at Four Turnings near Fowey is the Tristan Stone, erected near a layby on the left.

TRISTAN STONE

This 6th century pillar stone is 8-9ft high and set on a modern plinth. Originally it stood closer to Castle Dore. High on the north side is a Tau cross – an early form of Christian cross. On the front of the stone is a two lined inscription interpreted as 'DRVSTANVS HIC IACIT CVNOMORI FILIVS' although the first word is almost illegible. Translated it reads '*Drustanus lies here, son of Cunomorus*'. They were Tristan and Mark.

The town of Fowey, and the end of the drive, is at the bottom of the hill.



R I V E R F O W E Y DRIVEABOUT

Route taken - - -
Based upon the Ordnance Survey Map
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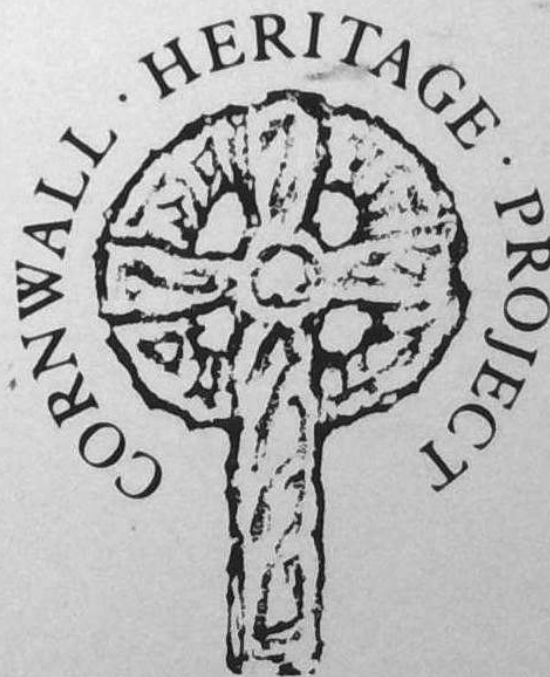
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Tristan Stone near Fowey



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