

THE WATERMILL WALK

WHITE ROUTE 7 MILES - ALLOW 4 HOURS

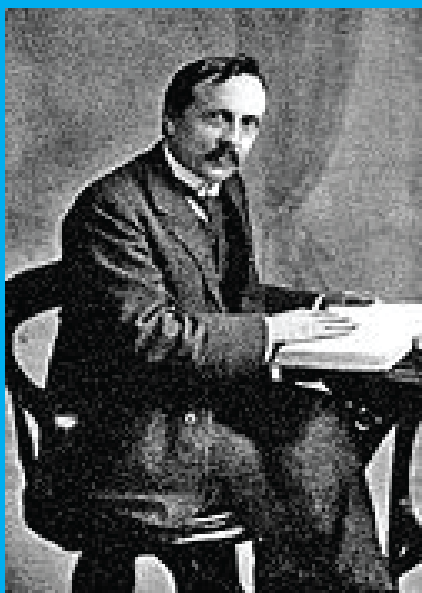


This walk is not suitable for persons wishing to take large or elderly dogs due to the number of stiles that need to be negotiated

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This walk, to the South and West of Camelford, is never far from the River Camel and its tributaries, which you cross and re-cross four times, with three more “near misses”. The importance of water, both to drink and as a source of power, is much in evidence, and the sight and sound of the streams is a constant delight. Starting from the free car park in the centre of Camelford, turn left and walk up the hill. The corner of Trefrew Road and Victoria Road, where there is now a hotel, is the site of one of the old tollgates, which used to stand at every approach to the town.



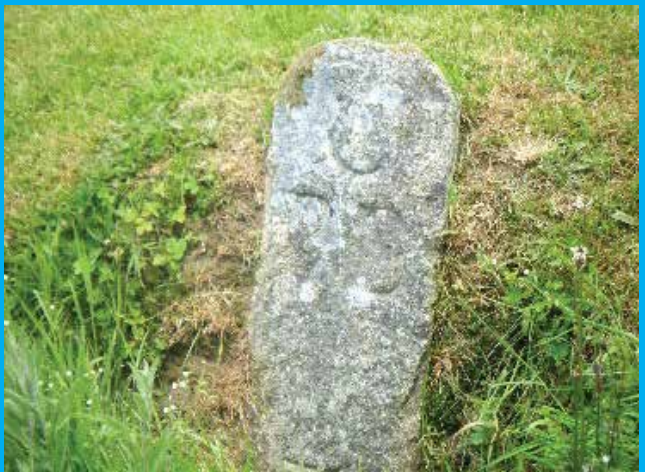
Communications were the life-blood of Camelford, and the tolls went towards the upkeep of vital roads. Continuing along the road you will see a house with a blue plaque dedicated to Samuel Pollard (1864-1915).

Born in Camelford, Samuel was a Methodist Minister and missionary who went to China and devised a written script known as Miao which is still used today.

A little further up you will pass the Old Bible Christian Chapel, built in 1841, flanked on the left by the old and “new” manses, and on the right by the school-room, the whole forming a substantial and pretty terrace which was originally known as Victoria Row in honour of the then recently-crowned Queen. Cross



the road and take the turning on the right signed to Roughtor. On the wall can be seen a blue sign. A memorial to the 43rd (Wessex) Division can be found on Rough Tor (another walk for another day!) Follow this road up to Tregoodwell. On your left you will see a Celtic Cross which was recently returned to its original site. The road leading down to the left is called Higher Cross Lane as this marks the northern boundary to the town. There is an old boundary stone nearby. There are stones to mark the boundaries around the old borough which are walked on special occasions. It is said that children would have their heads banged against each stone to remind them where they were!



The name, Tregoodwell, seems likely to mean what it says, as the place was traditionally supplied from a spring which is even now declared by the water authorities to be exceptionally pure.

The original part of the little hamlet is to the right of the road, where the cottages are grouped around an old lime tree. Recent building work on one of the houses revealed holes where pigeons were kept and fattened up to be eaten: the original “pigeon-hole”! As the road bears left you will pass an old cottage which has a stone archway over the door said to come from St Michael’s Chapel on Roughtor. Go down the road and over the bridge, then turn right over a slate stile into a wide farm lane which emerges into a meadow. Go straight ahead to gap in overgrowth to stile in hedge. Follow the stream up to a footbridge and cross over. Take the



stile on your left and carry on parallel to the stream across two fields.

Then turn right and follow the hedge uphill over 2 fields into the lane at Aldermoor. Turn left, past the house, and then go right,

through a white gate and along a stony lane. Follow path across 3 fields with the hedge on your right. Then straight across next 2 fields to a gate and stile. Right to lane. Then straight across next 2 fields to a gate and stile. Right to lane at Moorgate. Turn right along the narrow road and past the farmhouse. Along this part of the walk you will see some fine examples of dry stone hedges set in a herringbone pattern. This is known as either a “curzy way” or herringbone hedge. The top two layers often have a large and then a small stone known as “Jack and Jill”.



A Cornish hedge is a stone-faced earth bank, often with bushes or trees growing along the top. It is not known as a hedgerow or wall.

Carry on until you come to a granite stile on the left. The path crosses a field where the number of granite boulders lying around suggest the remains of some early settlement. Look ahead for the Long Stone, a tall asymmetric granite post, and make your way towards, and past it, to a wooden stile. Turn left, and continue along a farm lane, into next field with hedge on your right and head to a way mark and 2 gateways. Take left one diagonally across the next field to the far bottom corner. You will find yourself in a little valley where a stream, mostly hidden



among trees, burbles on its way from the moor to join the River Camel. Follow along the stream until a length of granite causeway brings you to the road at Watergate where you turn right (the Moorland Walk turns left here).

You will see a little granite framed door in the hedge, on your right at the brow of the hill, at some farm buildings. You will see an old milk stand with some steps, where the farmer used to put his churns of fresh milk for the lorry to take to the creamery. This leads to an old well, whose water now provides a pumped supply. As you walk up the hill there is a view on the left hand side across to the old Stannon China Clay Works, where the long low mounds provide a backdrop to the little chapel of Highertown.



Stannon Works and Stone Circle (1) and an aerial view (2)

Straight ahead, in the distance, is Helsbury, site of an ancient encampment. It was originally constructed as an Iron Age hill fort. There is very little left but it still provides amazing views in all directions. Its little chapel was dedicated to St. Michael (hence Michael-

stow), as are those of many Cornish hill-tops such as Roughtor, Roche and, of course, St. Michael's Mount.



Helsbury Castle

As the road approaches a T-junction, it is crossed by a "church path", used, and indeed made, by people on their way from Heneward and Highsteps to worship at Advent. Follow the waymarks across the fields and you will arrive at Advent Church. After visiting the church, return to the gate by which you entered the graveyard, and turn half right across the field to a stile which takes you down into the road. Go



straight across and into the next field, where the path leads to Tresinney Cross. Climb over the stile, turn right and follow the hedge and over the next stile. Go right towards 2 "please lift" stiles and down some steps. Turn left into next field and bear right to pole and stile. Turn right and follow hedge to little gate into Short Farm Lane to a gate and onto double gates at Trewint.



Entering the farm lane on a bend, turn right and walk down the hill to Trecarne.

Looking left you will see a dramatic rocky outcrop on the skyline: part of the Devil's Jump. The story is that the Devil, being chased out of Cornwall by the giant Tregagle, jumped clean across the valley at this point. This is a remote, open part of the moor where there are very few landmarks and mists can fall quickly.



Near the bottom of the hill, the sound of running water betrays the presence of a spring, channelled under the lane, and emerging on the left, to cascade down the steep bank to join the stream. At Trecarne, the tributary from the Devil's Jump, coming in from the left, is crossed by a ford alongside a handsome clapper bridge (Henon Bridge) made of immense

slabs of granite. Go across the bridge. The building on the right is Trecarne Mill where they once crushed bones to make fertiliser. Go up the hill past the mill. On your left is Trecarne farmhouse, with its granite mullioned upper windows and hood-moulded ground floor windows and front door.



Trecarne Farmhouse



Trecarne Mill

The footpath goes off the lane to the right just below the farm, and crosses a patch of waste ground just below some beehives. The beehives are to your left and are still active so it is a good idea to show some caution.

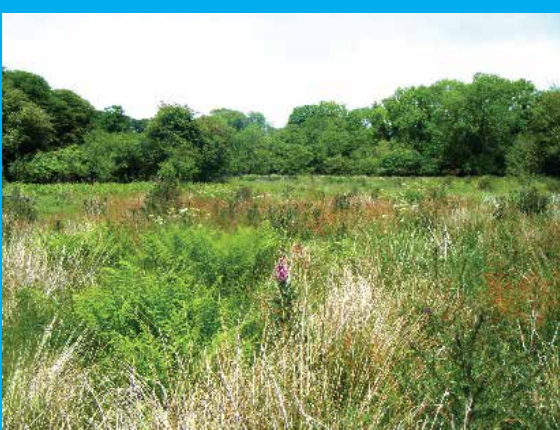
Go over a stile where the path continues along the lower edge of a steep field. Looking down the river, on your right, it is possible to see the course of the old leat, which took water from the Camel to power Trecarne Mill.

Presently the valley opens out and the path goes across more level ground to a stile into the road, under which the tail-race of Kenningstock Mill flows swiftly in a deep, narrow channel.



It is amazing to think how much work was done by the River Camel, whose stream, not large in these upper reaches, powered one mill after another along its course, from Saxon times until the present century. Here at Kenningstock it is still working, to generate electricity for the mill house, but the place is quiet now, compared to the hive of activity that it must have been until well after the First World War. At that time, besides the use of local wheat, grain was imported from Canada to Plymouth Dock, carried by rail to Camelford Station, and thence by horsedrawn wagon to the mill, which produced both animal feed (barley/maize meal and bran) and flour for bread making. Later, between 1947 and 1964, the mill was used to crush spar stone to make scoring powder known as "One and All". The path leading to the house is made from old mill stones.

Turn left pass the mill house, then immediately right and through the gate into the lane which takes you up behind the mill. On the right you can see the mill leat, where it curves round, before dropping in all twenty feet to the river driving the turbine on the way. Carry on past the farm buildings, through the gate at the top of the old yard, and then turn right walking along the bottom of three fields. The field on the right of the path is considerably lower, indicating that the hedge is a very old one, where the soil, working its way down the hill through centuries of cultivation, has built up. The Camel winds its way across the valley floor. Kenningstock Mill leat is sometimes visible, taking a direct course on the near



side of the river.

Having crossed a stile, go diagonally up over the next field, to a “step stone” stile onto the Camelford-Bodmin road. Turn right and follow the road, with care, for about 350 metres until the hedge to the left of the road becomes considerably taller. Rejoin the footpath on your right. Follow the hedgeline into the woods,

and so out onto the valley floor. Follow the way-marked route into the woods and through two fields to the road at Fenteroon. Fenten is the Cornish for a spring, or fountain, and there is indeed a spring at Fenteroon Farm.



Turn right and take the footpath on the left which goes behind the buildings, through the fields and several kissing gates, until it reaches the main street of Camelford just above Tuckingmill House. Turn right and walk through the town. Cross the river for the last time, and return to the car park.

The phrase, “ By Tre, Pol and Pen shall ye know all Cornishmen”, was recorded by Richard Carew in his Survey of Cornwall which was published in 1602. Tre is settlement or homestead, Pol is a pond or lake

and Pen is a hill. Many Cornish places have these prefixes. Placenames are often pronounced by stressing the second syllable.

Produced by Camelford Town Council

MAP OF THE ROUTE

