

## St Erth pits

In a paper read before a society of savants in 1886 on the then recent discovery of shells in the Saint Erth clay-beds, Professor R W Bell remarked that the deposit of clay in the Saint Erth sandpit was one of the most interesting discoveries which had been made in Tertiary geology for some years. Made up of sand and clay beds the pits were worked from around 1834 to 1950s. The sand was used by Harvey's foundry in Hayle, for making the moulds for beam engines for the mines. The clay was used for lining (puddling) Penzance harbour, to affix miners' candles and by Bernard Leach at his St Ives pottery. Fossils of sea snails, corals etc are in the blue clay beds. It is now a geological nature reserve. Further information is on the board outside the Star Inn

## Nature Notes

Walking around St Erth in spring the blue of native bluebells is abundant in the hedgerows, river banks, footpaths and lanes and frogs and toads can often be spotted along Green Lane. Through the year the early purple marsh orchid and foxgloves appear along with the flowering hawthorn, blackthorn (its fruit is used in the making of sloe gin), and blackberry. Their flowers along with those of nettles, honeysuckle, campion and buddleia attract the peacock, tortoiseshell, cabbage white and red admiral. The six spotted burnet moth which is active during summer days can be seen feeding on scabious, bird's-foot trefoil, vetch and clover, and is easily identified by its dark green wings with vibrant red spots. Honey bees from their hives near the river are always busy collecting pollen and nectar to take back to their hives. The resulting honey is collected from their hives by Jenny and sold in the village shop.

During the day often visible are heron, little egret and buzzard and in the summer visitors include the chiffchaff, house martin, swallow, swift, wagtail and redstart. Listen out for the cuckoo, woodpecker, reed warbler and at dusk in the summer the sound of the rooks, crows and starlings gathering to roost, later hear the barn and screech owl and the blackcap is now a frequent visitor to St Erth Pits. An evening stroll along the riverbank is accompanied by pipistrelle bats rushing around, there is also a rare chance of a glimpse of an otter looking for a meal of brown trout and eel.

Tell Cornwall Council if you see:  
Japanese knotweed or Ragwort

# QUIZ

Your name

1. Whose name is inscribed on the mortar of the bridge by the church car park? .....
2. Why are models of heron put around a lake along The Green Lane? .....
3. Where can you see the Trewinnard Coach? .....
4. What is the number of the National Cycle route which goes across St Erth bridge? .....
5. Which family had Trebartha Place built ..... and when (on plaque)? .....
6. What does NTL shown near the bridge on the map stand for? .....
7. Which King wrote a letter of thanks to St Erth, a painted copy is inside the church? .....
8. When was the present Methodist chapel built? .....
9. Which bush does the sloe berry come from? .....
10. Who was the last blacksmith in St Erth? .....
11. How many beehives are there in the garden at the end of The Green Lane? .....
12. Which annual river event takes place in St Erth on Good Friday? .....
13. What is the Cornish for Old Barn? .....
14. Who was the famous potter who used clay from St Erth Pits? .....
15. Who did John Harvey's daughter, Jane, marry? .....
16. What was Tredrea Lane previously named? .....
17. Which unusual architectural feature does St Erth church have? .....
18. When was the pump house built ..... and who by? .....
19. What is the green "shed" on the river bank near the Green Lane bridge for? .....
20. What is the height of the river today? .....

... WE HOPE YOU ENJOYED YOUR WALK

LOOK FOR ::

|             |            |              |        |                     |
|-------------|------------|--------------|--------|---------------------|
| Rabbit      | Adder      | Little Egret | Holly  | Hazel               |
| Brown Trout | Slow worm  | Moorhen      | Oak    | Blackthorn          |
| Badger      | Swan       | Mallard      | Ash    | Orange tip          |
| Fox         | Kestrel    | Magpie       | Willow | Silver Studded Blue |
| Stoat       | Kingfisher | Wren         | Alder  | Elephant Hawk Moth  |

D X F M L S X M X U K N T S C P  
 A V H A D X C G P D Q H C C U V  
 V O N A H Y C H O Y E F D F N S  
 I L Y B N I W X O B Y C R O B T  
 E D V V F V F S R O H M T V E R  
 S S J W T M I I T A L P K E S F  
 G C F O L O D L P A M L R G O J  
 I H U K H G F E H A R T A R A O  
 L O O C E N L D H O S I E N P H  
 B O H W L H H M I H U S N O E N  
 E L V C I Y A A C P T S K N U H  
 R R R L J I K R W R J O E L K A  
 T O L R L S U V E K Y H K J Q R  
 K O W L Y H J E K R I K Q U D V  
 H M I G C F T F J G S N L R X E  
 N W D P F O C L P X F E S O T Y

## OUT & ABOUT

See how many of the people, buildings and street names of St Erth you can find 'hidden' in our wordsearch.

ANVIL HOUSE

STAR INN

THE BRIDGE

OLD SCHOOL ROOM

JOHN HARVEY

DAVIES GILBERT

JOHN HAWKINS

WILLIAM HAMPTON

FORE STREET

CHAPEL HILL

CHURCH STREET

SCHOOL LANE

It is thought that the 'Saint Erth Valley' was once an arm of the sea, or, 'a somewhat shallow gulf occupying at least the valley in which Saint Erth is placed, and which probably connected the northern and southern seas of Cornwall'. A Bronze or Iron Age fortified enclosure at the top of St Erth Hill known as "Carnabeggas" was possibly the original settlement until a crossing of the river was established and people moved into the valley. The C14 bridge, provided the main coaching route through to Penzance. It was along this route that tin was carried upcountry from the stannaries of Penwith. The bridge was widened by Davies Gilbert 1816. The causeway, built in 1825 diminished St Erth's importance and prevented any navigation up the river to the village.

The actual Parish of St Erth and its boundaries was formed about 1160 although in 1291 it was known as Lanudnou, Sancti Ercu by 1349, with variations until by 1819 St Erth was established. There was an annual harvest fair on 18 September, an event which has long gone. The Parish Council had its first Meeting in 1895 and its history is well documented. St Erth Feast Day is celebrated on the Sunday nearest November 2.

The present Parish Church was originally built in C14 or C15, however the churchyard cross suggests that a church existed here from at least the C10. There are six bells in the C14 tower, the tenor bell was recast by Harvey & Co Ltd, Hayle, in January, 1901. Although the church is not large, the builders managed to convey a sense of spaciousness. It is difficult to date the Church accurately because of extensive restoration and re-building carried out several times during its history. A Press report after restoration in 1874 stated "The work taken in hand was so extensive a character that of the old building all that now remained are the tower and pillars, the latter having had to be extensively restored". There are two dormer windows, unusual in a church, each with a pair of angels carved at its corners. The carving in the Trewinnard Chapel, also early C20, was done by Miss Violet Pinwill renowned for her excellent ecclesiastical carvings.

Methodism probably came with skilled artisans from the Midlands who built Battery Mill in 1782. In 1796 the first Methodist chapel was built up at the cross where the post office is now. Before that a 'hired' room was used. The present Methodist chapel of 1827 was built as a

result of increasing numbers following revivals. There was a Wesleyan Day School from 1872 to 1922 attached to the chapel, closed when the new Council School took over education in St Erth. The boundary wall was added in 1909 with iron railings and gates from the Coalbrookdale Foundry. The gates were later replaced by the present ones made by Mr Eslea Palmer Lashbrook of Anvil House, St Erth's long time blacksmith who was also responsible for a number of others still in use, particularly along Fore Street.

The St Erth population increased during late C18th and early C19th because of the mining, foundry, and rolling copper work. The miners had a life expectancy of less than 40 years on average. Women and children from the age of 6 years were employed in the ore processing work at surface without shelter in all weathers. Another indication of the size of the population then is the fact that there were two public houses of which only the "Star" which dates back to 1686 survives and New Inn now Mena House. There were also "winks" so called as they were only licensed to sell ale, but a wink to the landlord would get a glass of (smuggled) spirit.

The population has changed. There are no mines or foundry works. The farms have got bigger and the number of farmers and farm-workers has declined. Work is found outside the parish. There are more retired people and those born outside the parish and many of the old St Erth families have gone.

Fortunately, unlike some Cornish villages, St Erth has not become a place which almost entirely consists of second homes with a complete loss of shop, post office and public transport. There are young families and the population has grown and the primary school is thriving.

Want to learn more?

See [www.st-erth.co.uk](http://www.st-erth.co.uk) and "Clurks, Clidgy & Doodle-Dashers - Hayle Tales & Trails" at <http://hayletaleshome.blogspot.co.uk>



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Parish  
Council

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Walking and learning for all with

# The St Erth Family Activity Trail

with the Hayle area 'Walkers are Welcome'

ROUTE MAP • QUIZ • HERITAGE AND NATURE NOTES  
WORD SEARCH • EYE-SPY • A FUN WALK FOR ALL AGES



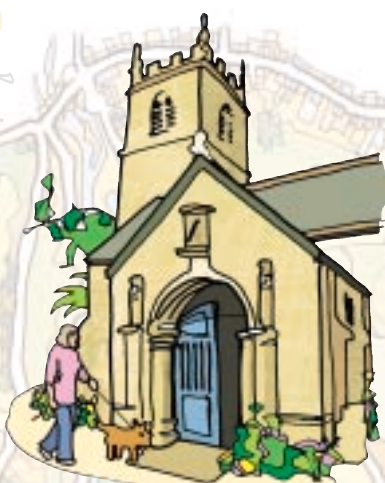
Trebartha Place  1 point



Cat on the chimney  2 points

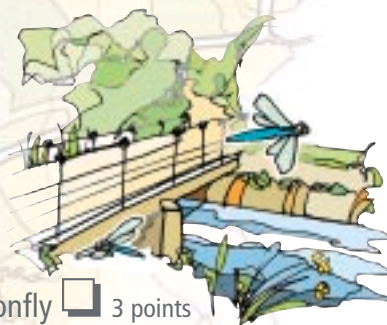


Trout or Bream  3 points



Sundial - what's the time?

3 points



Dragonfly  3 points



The 'Coffin Stopper'  2 points



Trewinnard Manor  1 point



The pumphouse  2 points

Eye-Spy total



St Erth  
Parish  
Council

# The St Erth Family Activity Trail

**Parking:** Free parking opposite the Old School Room.

**Refreshments:** There is the Star Inn which has hot meals and good ales, also the Village Shop/Post Office/Café with free internet access.

**Public Toilets:** Tredrea Lane.

**Public telephone:** Outside the Post Office.

Always remember to follow the Countryside Code when out and about...

“stick to the paths, close gates, pick up after your dog and pocket your litter” ...thankyou.

## Locations around the churchyard.

The little map on the right will help you find your way around the churchyard, please be respectful as you explore.

There are two interesting ancient crosses in the churchyard and you will see a medieval lantern cross stands in the square by the Post Office.

The churchyard cross with its figure of Christ on one side and bosses on the other displays similar characteristics to the early tenth century crosses on the Penwith peninsula, around St Buryan and the early medieval monastery there.

The wayside cross was found in 1896 built into a garden wall at Battery Mill. When Mr Gilbert, the owner of the mill, died in the 1890s the cross was removed to the churchyard and placed on a modern base over his grave.

- |                            |                                 |                                  |
|----------------------------|---------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 1 The Parish Church        | 14 Star Inn                     | 27 St Erth RSS                   |
| 2 The Wayside Cross        | 15 Post Office/Shop/Tea Shop    | 28 Pump House                    |
| 3 The Churchyard Cross     | 16 Medieval Lantern Cross       | 29 POW Camp (site of)            |
| 4 Harvey Family Graves     | 17 New Inn                      | 30 Stamps Lane                   |
| 5 Jane Trevithick's Grave  | 18 St Erth C. P. School         | 31 Beehives                      |
| 6 Old School Rooms         | 19 Anvil House                  | 32 Carbis Mill                   |
| 7 The Bridge               | 20 Trebartha Place              | 33 Battery Mill                  |
| 8 Play Area                | 21 Parish Vestry/Memorial Rooms | 34 Tremelling Moor               |
| 9 Normal tidal limit (NTL) | 22 Emily Tredrea's House        | 35 Trewinnard Manor              |
| 10 Wesleyan Day School     | 23 Allotments                   | 36 Spitfire (crash site in 1942) |
| 11 The Chapel              | 24 Football Field               | 37 'Coffin Stopper' Cattle Grid  |
| 12 Winks                   | 25 The Old Vicarage             | 38 Tredrea Manor                 |
| 13 Coth Skyber (Old Barn)  | 26 St Erth Pits                 | 39 The Dixies                    |

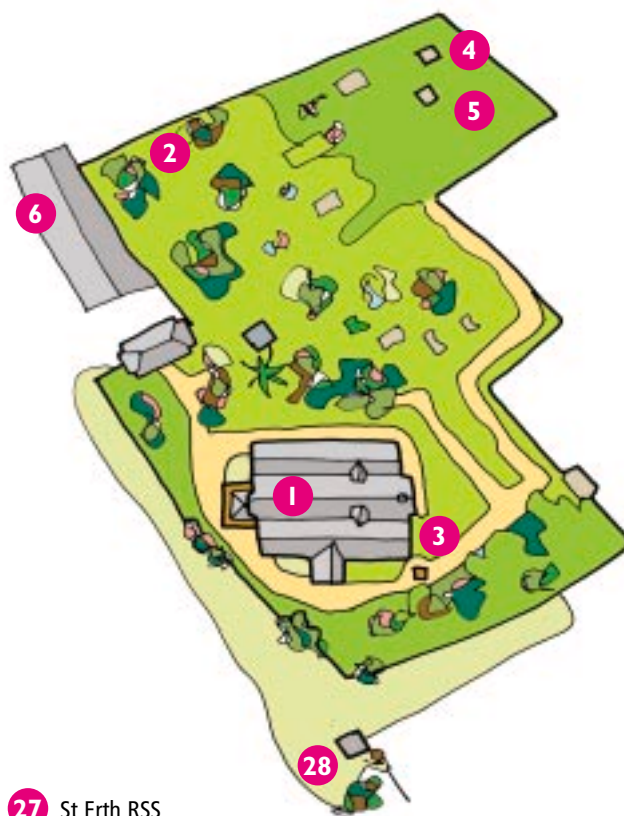
## Distances and suitability:

1 mile: The Green Lane Mile Walk for 2012. Wheelchair/pushchair friendly to the bridleway then advance with care.

3.2 miles: In wet weather can be very muddy in parts.

1.6 miles: In wet weather can be very muddy in parts.

1.2 miles: In wet weather can be very muddy in parts.



## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks to Cedric Appleby, CARBIS One Name Society and Hayle Oral History for allowing the use of their material.

For more information on Hayle Walkers are Welcome contact: WAW@hayletowncouncil.net

More walks around St Erth can be found at [www.st-erth.co.uk](http://www.st-erth.co.uk) and [www.walk4life.info/find-a-walk](http://www.walk4life.info/find-a-walk)



St Erth Farmers Market, held every Saturday in the Methodist Chapel, sells, fruit, locally reared meat and farm grown vegetables, fish, freshly baked bread, pasties and cakes, honey and eggs, as well as good quality Cornish craft.

Originally started as a way to raise funds for the chapel hall, the market has now become a popular social event in the village and attracts hundreds people each week who come to shop and chat over a tea or coffee.

The Harvest Home Auction held on the last Friday in September at the Star Inn and the Good Friday Egg Hunt and Duck Race are annual events organized by the St Erth Feast Committee which raise funds for the older generation of the village.

In the Square there is a chimney with a cat on it. This was placed there by Henry Richards, a mason, when he was renovating it in mid 1980s.

The River Hayle is tidal up to St Erth and the Normal Tidal Limit is shown on OS maps as NTL.

**37** The unusual cattle grid at Tredrea was specifically designed with its curved walls to stop coffins being taken over the fields to the church rather than the longer road route. Wrought iron railings were embedded along the top of the wall which prevented the coffin being raised high enough to pass over the curves. Despite its construction cattle were known to be able to manoeuvre through it.

Davies Gilbert of Tredrea Manor was a Cornish Member of Parliament for 30 years, which was but one of the activities of his life (1767-1839). He was a President of the Royal Society, and was known as "the Cornish Philosopher", his chief claim to fame being as a scientist.

A stone memorial in his memory is in the south aisle of the Parish Church. He "discovered" Sir Humphry Davy and collaborated with the inventor Richard Trevithick who married Jane Harvey in 1797 at St Erth Church, the daughter of John Harvey, of the Hayle Foundry.

Reeds similar to those growing either side of the river were harvested for roof thatching, the main supply coming from a rectangular "water-bed" between Carbis Mill and Relubbus.

**34** The Tremelling Moors under Trewinnard were filled in by the council with refuse which was then covered with fly ash from the Hayle Power Station. Parts are now being put to farm use again. This and land either side of the river is all designated flood plain. There is a depth gauge near the Green Lane bridge and equipment in the green hut on the river bank monitors the water height so that flood warnings can be given.

Battery Mill closed as a rolling mill in 1809 when the Cornish Copper Company ceased but it remained in use forging farm tools until the 1900s. It is now a dog hydrotherapy centre.





The focal point for Remembrance Day services is the cross erected and in the churchyard by Mrs Helen Carter. Dedicated in 1917, it is in memory of her husband, Major Herbert Carter VC, who died on active service in WW1. She particularly wished that the names of St Erth men killed were included. Sadly, several more names had to be added by the end of that war. Later those from the parish who died in the Second World War were added to the list. The cross is of Forest of Dean stone.

A number of the old houses along Fore Street have gropes (alleys) leading to further houses behind. The gropes had rooms above and trap hatches where furniture and coffins were taken up and lowered. Many of these were owned by the Rodd family of Trebartha House (Launceston) who built the small industrial cottages on Trebartha Place which were rented out.

William Hampton, 24, was the hanged 20 July 1909, the last execution at Bodmin Gaol and in Cornwall, for the murder of Emily Barnes Trevarthen Tredrea, 16, at Vicarage Row where Emily's family lived and he lodged. Having been buried in an unmarked grave a gravestone was finally put in place for Emily by two of her nephews and two great nieces in 2011. Big Lane was renamed Tredrea Lane in her memory.

Until the 1830s farmers had to give a tenth of their produce to the rectors and vicars of their parishes and this would have been stored in the Tithe barn, Coth Skyber, on Chapel Hill.

At the top of St Erth Hill can be seen the remains of a secret from WWII. Many locals refer to the site as a radar station, but in fact it was a Radio Security Service station set up by MI8 in 1939 and later taken over by MI6. Personnel serving there scanned the airwaves for encoded enemy wireless traffic and passed the messages up to RSS HQ who then fed them into Bletchley Park.

**30** Stamp mills or batteries are heavy iron machines used to pulverize rocks into a fine dust so the ore can be extracted. Those in St Erth were powered by water wheels. Ore rock was taken down Stamps Lane to batteries of stamps near the river. The stamps were in continuous use and could be heard for several miles.

German and Italian WWII Prisoners of War and displaced persons of various nationalities were based in a camp at St Erth. They worked in the "Dixies", (open cast mines now fishing lakes) along the side of the river. The Italians also helped make a road all the way from St Erth Church up to Relubbus bridge and built the pump house to feed water into their camp and the village.

It is said that there are the remains of old moorings and the wreck of a small barge a little further upstream, Exeter University carried out some excavations and found part of an old village, possibly medieval.

Carbis Mill was first mentioned on the 27th January 1650 as a 'stamps' mill, then as a 'flushing' mill and again later as a 'griest' mill. It is possible that boats came upriver to Carbis Mill but this would have to have been before 1338 when the first bridge at St Erth was built. The last miller of Carbis was Mr Richard Berryman who died in 1941. His widow then kept the mill operating for a further seven years, until the costs of transporting grain and the added expense of general repairs to the mill made it uneconomical. The main point of interest is that this mill had two independent waterwheels and two pairs of stones.

The Trewinnard coach was built about 1700 and is probably Spanish or Portuguese. It was brought to Trewinnard Manor in 1750s by Christopher Hawkins who had a road built from the house to the parish church

along Green Lane so the family did not have to take the longer route. The coach remained at Trewinnard until 1909 when it was extensively restored by J Fuller & Co in Bristol and is now in the Royal Cornwall Museum, Truro. There is a vault for the Hawkins family in the churchyard.



The original of this old photo hangs in the Star Inn.

