

The Pentewan Railway Line

Distance - 4km (2½ miles) Map Ordnance Survey Explorer 105, Falmouth and Mevagissey, 1:25,000. Ascent - none.



— - Walk

① - See attached instructions for details of points

P - Carpark

Disclaimer:

This route was correct at time of writing. However, alterations can happen if development or boundary changes occur, and there is no guarantee of permanent access. These walks have been published for use by site visitors on the understanding that neither HPB Management Limited nor any other person connected with Holiday Property Bond is responsible for the safety or wellbeing of those following the routes as described. It is walkers' own responsibility to be adequately prepared and equipped for the level of walk and the weather conditions and to assess the safety and accessibility of the walk.

The Pentewan Railway Line

Walk 9

Distance - 4km (2½ miles) Map Ordnance Survey Explorer 105, Falmouth and Mevagissey, 1:25,000. Ascent - none.

The Penewan Railway was constructed by Sir Christopher Hawkins in 1829 to transport china clay from the St. Austell area to the port at Pentewan, which had a lock connection to the sea. Coal and lime were imported, providing return freight to St. Austell. The line was built to a gauge of two feet six inches and was never connected to the main railway system, which reached St. Austell some years later.

Although there were extensions to the port and reservoirs were constructed just inland of Pentewan, there was a constant (and losing) battle against silting. During the early years the loaded wagons travelled most of the way to the port by gravity; horses were used to complete the journey. In 1874 steam locomotives were introduced; there were never more than two at any one time. Although there was never an official passenger service on the line, the Hawkins family had a saloon carriage and occasional Sunday School outings used trucks to carry passengers to Pentewan. The final freight was carried on the second of March, 1918, following which the rails were lifted. However, at the port there were various branches to the quays, including one serving a small engine shed. Small sections of rail can still be found in situ.

Unlike nearby Mevagissey, Pentewan is a comparatively quiet little resort of some charm, with inn, café and shop. There is access to a large adjacent beach. The curiously named London Apprentice, with large caravan site, is nothing more than a straggle of houses and a general store, strung along the Mevagissey road, B3273. The walk is very easy, the former railway line, now the 'Pentewan Trail' for horse riders, cyclists and walkers, providing much of the route, close to the St. Austell River. King's Wood is an area of ancient woodland of native English trees, with its own system of organised footpaths.

Start/car parking layby on the B3273, St. Austell to Mevagissey road, [grid reference 008502](#). Opposite Queenie's General Store at London Apprentice. An alternative is a small off-road car park, accessed by a roadway to a quarry, a quarter mile south of the layby.

Refreshments Inn and café at Pentewan.

The Pentewan to St. Austell bus service provides the return for this linear walk.

WALK

Walk to the St. Austell end of the layby; turn right at once, at a 'Pentewan Valley Trail' signpost. Cross the river, bearing left then right; there are cycle trail signs.

① In a further 20m. turn right at another 'Pentewan Valley Trail' signpost. More signs include 'Coast and Clay Trail'. The broad track passes behind a large caravan site, with a wooded valley side to the left and hedgerows rich in foxgloves and campion. At a signposted gate and barrier turn right, along a minor road, reaching a signpost and the small car park mentioned above, now on tarmac. At the next signposted junction turn right slightly downhill. The track is excellent, with King's Wood, rich in beech, sycamore and holly, to the left. Cross a stream and bear left, soon along a more open section, with the river and road to the right.

② Pass another car park and a 'Welcome to King's Wood' information board. Continue between the former railway embankment and the river, passing the end of a wooden bridge. Go straight ahead – 'Pentewan one mile' – Across the river is another caravan site. Bear left into woodland;

large areas of swampy ground are avoided by the excellent track. Cross a wooden bridge at a ford and pass a plaque recording the opening of the trail on the thirty-first of March, 1995. Before joining the road in Pentewan, pass a cycle hire depot.

③ Turn left at the road to reach the village centre and harbour. An information board near the harbour includes interesting old photographs of village and railway. It is worth going a little further along the line of the former railway to find the sea lock, the loading quays and the embedded lengths of rail.

To return, go back to the main road. Cross the road, turn left and walk for fifty metres. Wait for the bus back to London Apprentice (26 or 526 - each is an hourly service) across the road from the bus shelter.