

Secret beaches

southwest

50 short walks
to secluded shores

Rob Smith



Secret beaches

southwest



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 one
more
grain
of
sand
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INTRODUCTION

Secret Beaches: Southwest began life back in 2002 as a small map and a long name – The West Cornwall Aerial Photography Map of Secluded Beaches and Hidden Coves. I'd heard rumours of the county's secret beaches and was determined to put my new-found cartography skills to use in mapping them. Just as I was about to embark on the project, though, I broke my right ankle in a climbing accident and – a few weeks later, after the cast had been removed – seriously twisted the other. A physiotherapist friend recommended gentle country walking. 'Uneven ground,' she said, 'is key to recovery.'

Convinced that researching the map would be perfect for my recuperation, I set off for Cornwall to test my tendons on the Southwest Coastal Path. I quickly forgot I was under orders to take it easy and took the 'uneven ground' advice to its limits by walking for miles up and down headlands each day. The project was a success, but it whetted my appetite to produce something bigger: a book that incorporated all 1,105 kilometres of the Southwest Coastal Path. And this time I was going to come up with a snappier title.

Secret Beaches: Southwest would not have been possible without the effortless good nature of the people who helped me along the way: farmers opening their fields for me to camp in; chance meetings that became spontaneous guided tours; casual conversations that led me down little-trodden paths. People of the Southwest, I salute you.

I hope you love visiting the beaches in this book as much as I've done. And that, thanks to the QR-codes I've included, scrambling down to some of the more difficult-to-access ones will be made easier by being able to carry all walk information on your phone. So in the spirit of the research and all those who helped me with it, let's take responsibility for these beaches. Let's help those who doggedly clean up the unending tide of flotsam that washes up upon the shores. Even picking up a few extra plastic bottle-tops along with your own rubbish will make a difference. You'll be making the beaches even more beautiful. They're yours to enjoy now, after all...



HOW TO USE THIS BOOK

We hope you'll find *Secret Beaches: Southwest* easy to use. To get to any of the beaches we've included, simply follow our Getting There directions or type the car park postcode into your SatNav device. And, once you're in situ, the map and Directions instructions will guide you around our suggested route. Here's some information on how we've rated our beaches and walks...

WALK INFORMATION

These details are for your reference, and will allow you to judge whether the walk we've suggested is within your capabilities.

Distance Given in kilometres.

Time How long it would take someone to travel across rough terrain at average walking speed.

Walk Grade Classed as Easy, Moderate or Difficult. A short walk that includes a very steep hill will be classed as Difficult, while a long walk over flat, undemanding terrain will be classed as Moderate.

Beach Access Classed as Easy, Moderate, Difficult or Extreme. A beach might be easy to get to, but if the access pathway down to it from the headland is long and steep, with a sheer drop on one side, we've classed it as Difficult. Take great care when descending to beaches listed as Extreme.

BEACH QUALITY RATINGS

We've rated the different aspects of the beaches from 1 to 5 – with 5 being the best or highest rating.

Seclusion A rating of 5 here means you're unlikely to see anyone else on the shore, except on the very hottest, sunniest summer days.

Sand A rating of 5 here means there is soft, golden sand to enjoy. A beach will also rate highly here if it offers small, smooth, comfortable pebbles.

Rockpools & caves A rating of 5 here means the beach is home to plenty of rockpools that are ideal for crabbing, etc. A beach will also rate highly if there are some great caves to explore nearby.

Swimming A rating of 5 here means the beach slopes gently into the sea and there are no apparent strong currents offshore.

MAP KEY

- Walk start/finish point
- ② Walk direction number
- P Pub/Inn
- P Car park
- C Cafe/Tea room
- T Public toilets

- Walk route
- Road/lane
- Pathway
- River/stream
- - - Walk shortcut
- · - · - Optional extra walk

- Secret beach
- Other beach
- Land
- Sea

- Lighthouse
Castle
Church
- Nature reserve
Viewpoint
Datum height
- Buildings

SWIM

SURF

ROCK
DIVING

DOGS
ALLOWED

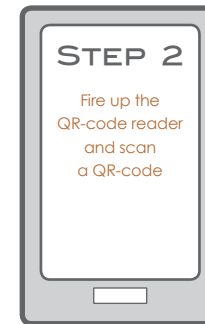
NATURISM

HOW TO USE QR-CODES (QUICK REFERENCE CODES)

Secret Beaches: Southwest is the first guidebook to make use of QR-code technology. You'll find black-and-white code boxes printed alongside each beach, which provide access to online versions of the maps, walk directions and pitstop information that you can download to your phone – so you don't have to carry the book with you when you visit the beaches. Installing the relevant software and downloading the beach information to your phone couldn't be simpler. Here's how to do it...



Most Smartphones come with a QR-code reader – this is an App that employs the camera on your phone to scan codes and access online information.



If you don't have a QR-code reader on your Smartphone, go to your App store to download one. Standard camera phone users can download the software from www.i-nigma.mobi

Once you've downloaded the QR-code reader, launch it as you would any other App. If you can't find it in your Apps folder, then look in your phone's Downloads folder.



Your phone's camera will automatically start looking for a QR-code to scan, so line it up over the one alongside your favourite beach.

Your phone will beep when the QR-code has been scanned, and will ask you if you want to go online. Select Yes, and you will be taken directly to the relevant webpage.

Once you're on the beach webpage, double-click on the pdf file and all information will be downloaded to your Photo Gallery or the Downloads folder in Files. You will then be able to access these files at any time. You certainly don't have to rely on the virtually dodgy mobile reception on the Southwest Coastal Path.

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LAND'S END
&
THE LIZARD

Atlantic Ocean



CORNWALL

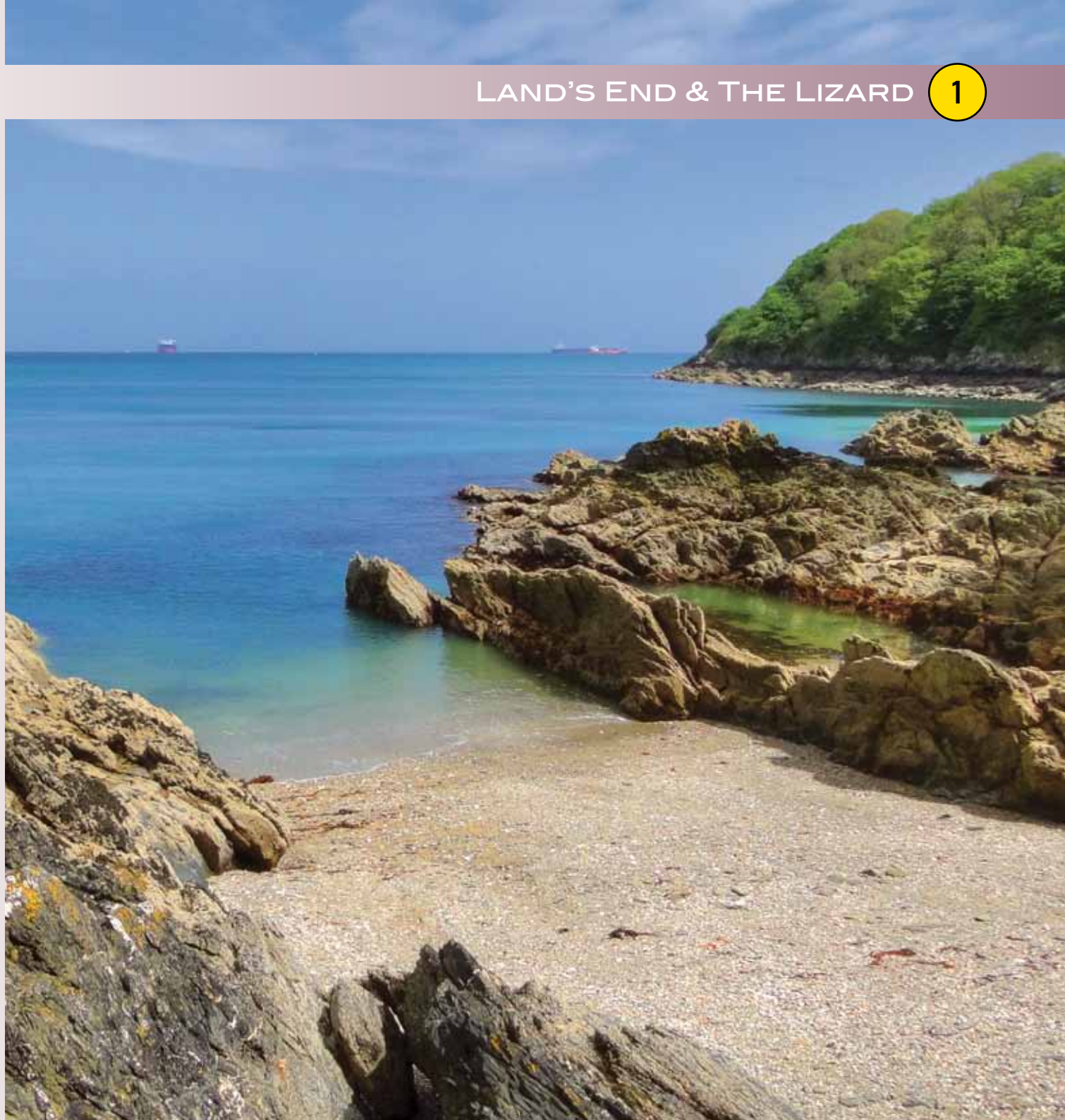
LAND'S END & THE LIZARD

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THE SECRET COVES OF THE HELFORD ESTUARY

Tucked beneath the arm of the expansive, ship-teeming mouth of the River Fal, the Helford Estuary is a small, perfectly formed area of rock-and-sand shores and forested banks that slinks its way across the top of the Lizard peninsula. Famed for its beauty and tranquillity, as well as its thriving wildlife – which includes some of Britain’s finest oysters – it is an ideal spot from which to enjoy the sunset. Find yourself a good vantage point, and watch the way crimson light splits into shards as it bounces off the surface of streams that curl inland through wooded valleys. The coves that are found here bear few traces of the modern world, and are sure to instil a love of nature in even the most hardened city-dweller. Our two suggested walks take in both shores of the estuary, and pass through some of the most secluded and beautiful beaches in the UK.



HELFORD ESTUARY

THE WALK

NORTH SHORE

Getting there: Head west out of Falmouth, and follow signs to Porth Navas. When you reach Helford Passage, look out for the car park (postcode: TR11 5LD).

Our suggested circular route is approximately six kilometres long. But it passes five beaches, so you can stop at any of these to cut the walk short.

To begin, walk down the hill from the car park, turning left onto the Coastal Path when you reach the shore. All of the beaches can be accessed from this winding track.

You will come across the first beach, Passage Cove, almost immediately. Our suggested North Shore pitstop, The Ferryboat Inn, is located here; as is the ferry pontoon that takes you across to the South Shore.

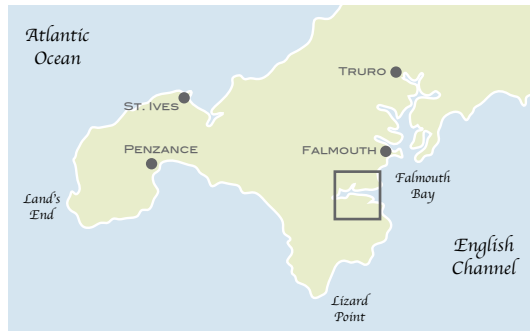
SOUTH SHORE

Getting there: Head west on the A394 to Helston, then follow signs to Helford. When you arrive in the village, park in the easy-to-find car park (postcode: TR12 6JX).

Once again, our suggested circular route – around five kilometres this time – can be shortened if you stop at a beach closer to the starting point.

Take the path from the car park, and walk along the shore through woodland that offers snapshot glimpses of the estuary through trees.

All four beaches are adjacent to this track. Simply walk out of the woods onto the sand.





Bosahan Cove at low tide

THE BEACHES - NORTH SHORE

A backdrop of open countryside and a south-facing shoreline means that the estuary's northern beaches are slightly more popular than those on the opposite side of the water. Strewn with tiny, barefoot-friendly pebbles and surrounded with dense, almost tropical-looking foliage, they are all wonderful places from which to go swimming. Stroll along a path that rolls out over gentle, grassy hills, occasionally dipping into woodland and streams, and tarry at your leisure. First comes Passage Cove, then Grebe Beach - the largest of our suggested stops - and Durgan Beach, which sits in front of an ancient village of eerily small houses. After Durgan come the twin beaches of Porth Saxon and Porthallack, both of which are as beautiful and secluded as any in the southwest.

PASSAGE COVE

SECLUSION	2
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	3

GREBE BEACH

SECLUSION	3
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	2
SWIMMING	4

DURGAN BEACH

SECLUSION	2
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	4

PORTH SAXON & PORTHALLACK

SECLUSION	3
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	4

THE BEACHES - SOUTH SHORE

The estuary's southern beaches are all accessed via a secretive path that winds through woodland adjacent to the shore. The first - unnamed - beach is reached by walking down a slipway towards the water, then picking your way back along the seafront in the direction of the car park for around 200 metres. Another 10 minutes of walking along the original path will bring you to another unnamed - and very hidden - cove, which is accessed from a tiny track that leads off to your left. The woods open out at Bosahan Cove, where fine golden sand sweeps down to where waves swell at the shore. And, after around another 10 minutes of walking along the path, you will reach the peaceful and shaded Ponsence Cove, and its tiny neighbour that sits behind rocks to the left.

UNNAMED *1

SECLUSION	3
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	4

BOSAHAN COVE

SECLUSION	4
SAND	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	4
SWIMMING	5

UNNAMED *2

SECLUSION	5
SAND	4
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	4

PONSENCE COVE

SECLUSION	4
SAND	3
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	4
SWIMMING	4



Grebe Beach at low tide



Ponsence Cove at low tide



THE PITSTOPS

NORTH SHORE

Recently taken over by the upmarket Wright Brothers restaurant group, The Ferryboat Inn at Helford Passage is now as much of a must-visit stop for its food as it is for the views it offers over the water. Secure a table on its beachside terrace, and order a plate of oysters – reared just along the estuary at Porth Navas – before tucking into the likes of Fowey mussels, Cornish crab and pan-fried prawns. *The Ferryboat Inn, Helford Passage, Cornwall TR11 5LB* [01326 250625; www.ferryboatinnhelford.com]

SOUTH SHORE

Everyone who spends any time in Cornwall is going to fancy a cream tea at some point, and they don't come much better than those at the picturebook-pretty Down By The Riverside Café in Helford. If all that jam and cream send your calorie-guilt levels into overdrive, the café also serves a good selection of reasonably priced snacks and light meals.

Down By The Riverside Café, Helford Chapel, Helford, Cornwall TR12 6LB [01326 231893; www.downbytheriverside.co.uk]

It might be slightly off-route, but The Shipwright Arms in Helford is worth the diversion. Just a few minutes' walk from the South Shore ferry slipway, it's a great place for a pint. The ubiquitous local Doom Bar bitter is here on draught, of course, but the Betty Stogs beer and bottled Helford Creek cider are sure to prove equally tempting.

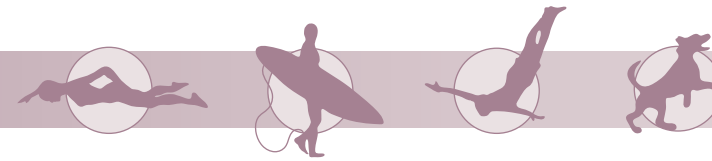
The Shipwright Arms, Helford, Cornwall TR12 6JX [01326 231235]



LANKIDDEN & DOWNAS COVES

These two neighbouring beaches are among this corner of England's most secluded. Downas Cove, the more deserted of the two, is a narrow splatter of sand edged by glistening rocks, on which saltwater pools mix and swirl as they attempt to fight their way back to the sea. Lankidden, its larger sibling, offers a wide strip of pale-yellow that, at low tide, provides access to tiny satellite coves that are hidden away on either side. Both are perfect spots for wild swimming; gentle inclines on each allow you to ease yourself into the water gently, letting each wave-ripple accustom you further to bracing Atlantic temperatures. Our suggested walk is an incredibly simple one. The route takes you along the Coastal Path to Lankidden – where ropes are provided to help with the steep descent to the beach – and onto Downas.



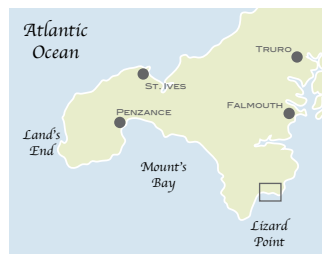


THE WALK

DISTANCE: 2KM
DURATION: 40 MINS
WALK GRADE: EASY
BEACH ACCESS: DIFFICULT & EASY

GETTING THERE

Head south on the B3293. Turn right at Zoar Petrol Station after Goonhilly and follow signs to Ponsongath and Gwenter. After about a mile, turn right to Ponsongath. Turn left at the Methodist church and follow the road for one mile, then take the track on the right before the farm. Follow this right down to the bottom and park on the headland after the last gate. Parking costs £1 (payable in an honesty box).



DIRECTIONS

- ① Leave your car, walk out onto the grassy headland, then turn left and head eastwards along the Southwest Coastal Path.
- ② After around 200 metres – just after you cross a stream and climb to the top of a dip – you will see the access path for Lankidden Cove on the right. The walk of 10 minutes or so gets incredibly steep towards the end, and you may want to make use of the rope banisters provided. Make sure they're securely attached before letting them take your weight.
- ③ To get to Downas Cove, head back to the Coastal Path and continue east for another 15 minutes. This will lead you into Downas Valley.
- ④ Go over two stiles and walk past a grassy area on the right. You can get onto the beach just after you cross the footbridge.
- ⑤ To return to the car park, simply head back along the Coastal Path.



THE BEACH

SECLUSION	4
SAND	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	2
SWIMMING	4



EBB & FLOW

Downas only reveals its sand for an hour or so either side of low tide. Lankidden is accessible until mid- to high tide. Both beaches are inaccessible once the sea comes in. There is a large area of grassy headland above Downas Cove, which you can use till the water retreats.

OS MAP BEACH REF
 SW 756,166
 SW 763,167
 CAR PARK POSTCODE
 TR12 6SH



THE PITSTOP

Perched on Dolor Point, looking back along the coastline towards Downas and Lankidden, The Paris Hotel may have an incongruous name, but in every other respect it's as Cornish as the blue-and-white pilchard boats that lie clumsily on the shore in front of its forecourt. Pints of Wreckers Ale and St Austell HSD are poured in the cosy bar area, while the Oceanview Restaurant offers a very affordable, daily changing menu dominated by fresh local seafood – think spiced haddock, baked pollock or a simple basket of battered cod and chips. It also serves up a range of vegetarian and vegan options, which isn't always a given in this part of the southwest.

The Paris Hotel, The Cove, Coverack, Cornwall, TR12 6SX (01326 280258; www.pariscoverack.com)

THE SEQUESTERED SANDS OF LIZARD POINT

The walk we've suggested here, around the Lizard Point, is the longest in the book for good reason. The full 15-kilometre route takes you around the most southerly parts of the British mainland, and past Kynance Cove – one of Cornwall's most spectacular and popular coastal stretches. It's secret beaches that we're concerned with, though, and Housel Cove and Pentreath Beach are stunning alternatives to the people-packed sands of their near-neighbour. At low tide, pretty Housel – located at the base of a steep valley – rolls out like a carpet towards the blue waters of the bay, while Pentreath rivals the famous surf spots of Fistral and Porthtowan in the amount of Atlantic swell that rears up before it. Don't let the length of our suggested walk put you off. The only hill worth worrying about is just after Church Cove at the beginning, and the rest of the route is as flat as can be. And, as you're never more than 20 minutes from your starting point in Lizard village, you're under no obligation to do the walk in its entirety. We seriously recommend you do though...



THE WALK

DISTANCE: 15KM
DURATION: 2 HOURS 30 MINS
WALK GRADE: MODERATE
BEACH ACCESS: EASY & EXTREME

GETTING THERE

Head south on the A3083 into Lizard village and park on the green in the centre (postcode: TR12 7NQ).



DIRECTIONS

- ① From the car park, follow signs down the lane to Church Cove. Walk all the way down to the Coastal Path and turn right.
- ② Follow the path for 45 minutes or so, past the lifeboat station and the Housel Bay Hotel. When you reach the bottom of a steep valley, turn left and descend the steps to Housel Cove.
- ③ To continue on to Pentreath Beach, carry on along the Coastal Path. This takes you past the lighthouse and, around 30 minutes later, to the tip of the Lizard – the most southerly point in mainland Britain. There’s a café serving good cream teas here, and an honesty-box shop at which you can pick up some jam for your own homemade version.
- ④ Continue along the path and, 50 minutes or so later, you will reach Pentreath Beach. At the time of writing, the steps down to the beach were closed because of erosion, but the local council have plans to fix this.
- ⑤ If the steps are inaccessible, the only way down to the beach is via a steep and precarious path that threads through loose rock. You can find it on the far side of the beach as you walk along the Coastal Path. Take care if you do decide to go down – and make sure you’re wearing suitable shoes.
- ⑥ To continue with our suggested route, return to the Coastal Path and carry on walking along. After around 10 minutes, you will see the beautiful Kynance Cove. To get down to it, take the access path that leads straight ahead.
- ⑦ To return to your car, head for the viewpoint above Kynance Cove then walk back through the car park behind you. Go up the lane and, at the first sharp bend around 400 metres in, turn onto the pathway that leads straight ahead into the fields. Follow this for 15 minutes or so back to Lizard village.





THE BEACHES

The first secret beach you'll come to on the walk is Housel Cove. A pretty inlet that looks out into Housel Bay, it is cloistered within a deep, south-facing valley, and protected from strong currents by the Bumble Rock and Pen Olver headlands on either side. Like most of the beaches on this section of coastline, its existence depends on the tides. But when the sea is out, the sands can spread into the bay for an impressive distance, making it an ideal spot for sunbathing and swimming.

Pentreath Beach, towards the end of our suggested walk, is a wide, flat sandy beach that is adored by in-the-know local surfers. They come because of the lack of submerged offshore rocks and its regular full-force pounding from the Atlantic Ocean. When the conditions are on the tranquil side, you can rely on Pentreath to be deserted. The perilous descent required deters all but the most adventurous of walkers.

HOUSEL COVE

SECLUSION	3
SAND	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	4
SWIMMING	5

PENTREATH BEACH

SECLUSION	4
SAND	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	4
SWIMMING	4





THE PITSTOPS

The most southerly village in mainland Britain, Lizard is a lively place that thrives on tourism, and caters well for the visitors that pass through it on the way to Lizard Point and Kynance Cove. It has two excellent pubs that specialise in freshly made, locally sourced food, and it's also home to several cafés, coffee shops, fish and chips takeaways, and lovely little restaurants. You can even pick up jams and pickles at The Most Southerly Honesty Box Shop, which also bizarrely sells a selection of chintzy jewellery. We've highlighted our favourites here – the two village pubs, mainland Britain's most southern café and a fine-dining hotel restaurant – but there are many others...

Buzzing gastropub The Witchball, situated between the village green and Lizard Point, is as popular with locals as it is with tourists. Parts of the building date from the 15th century, and its atmospheric black-and-white bar is a great place to sample the fine range of Cornish beers and ciders – many of which, including Witch Ball and Lizard Point, are supplied by the small, independent Organic Brewhouse. The restaurant is equally good. Fish and seafood are brought in daily by local fishermen, and everything from handmade pasties to vegetables are sourced from less than a mile away.
The Witchball, Lighthouse Road, Lizard, Cornwall TR12 7NJ [01326 290662; www.witchball.co.uk]

Looking down onto Polpeor Cove, Polpeor Café – also known as The Most Southerly Café – occupies one of the most desirable locations on the British coast. Its landmark status ensures a regular influx of visitors in all seasons, though its wonderful cream teas and all-day breakfasts would pull in punters even if it were located in a subterranean car park. As it's unlicensed, visitors are welcome to bring along their own drinks to accompany the food – which ensures that meals here remain very much in the budget category.
Polpeor Café, Lizard, Cornwall TR12 7NU [01326 290939]

The Top House Inn is a more traditional establishment, which serves all the usual St Austell ales – including Korev, its new Cornish lager – in a long, curved bar area. Its super-fresh seafood sets it apart, though. The crab and lobster are especially good as, each day, the man responsible for supplying them pops in to drop off his catch and have a pint of Doom Bar at the bar. He wouldn't be sticking around if he was ashamed of it, would he?

The Top House Inn, Lizard, Cornwall TR12 7NQ [01326 290974; www.thetophouselizard.co.uk]

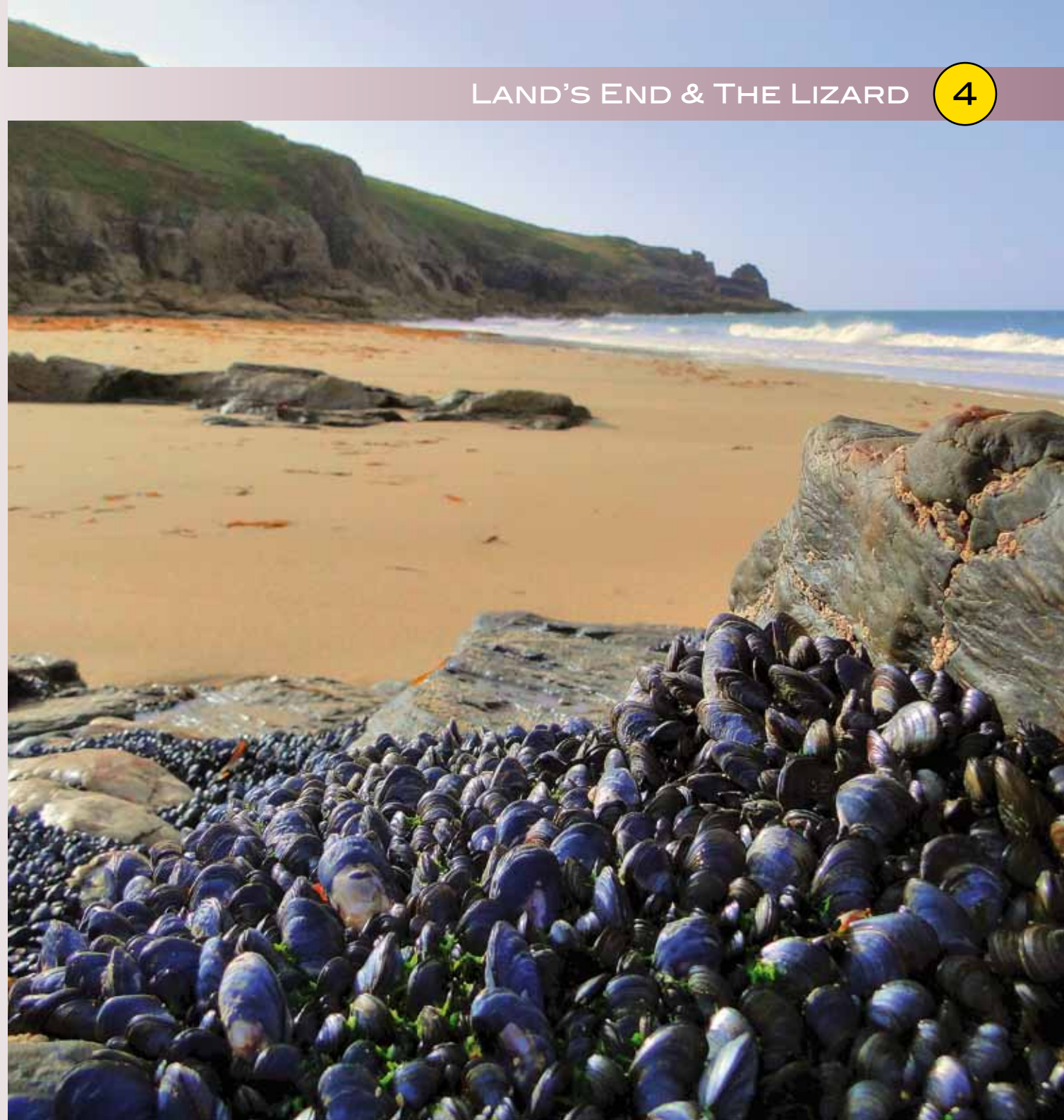
Set on a clifftop away from the village, Housel Bay Hotel may have a slightly Fawlty Towers feel, but there's nothing deranged about the welcome you'll receive here. And with talented chef Joe Roussel in the kitchen, Waldorf salads shouldn't be a problem. Sit in the floor-to-ceiling-windowed dining room and gaze out over the sea as you tuck into French-inspired dishes such as partridge with Madeira jelly or confit of duck with foie gras. The hotel also offers a bistro menu – grilled sardines, crab tart – at lunchtime, as well as sandwiches and cream teas.

Housel Bay Hotel, Lizard, Cornwall TR12 7PG [01326 290417; www.houselbay.com]



RINSEY BEACH

A mere 20-minute walk from the ever-popular Praa Sands, Rinsey Beach provides a wonderful alternative to the thronging shores of its near-neighbour and the other beaches of Mount's Bay. With one half comprised of soft, feet-tickling sand and the other of craggy, pool-concealing rocks, this cove is ideal for anyone looking to while away a warm, sunny day. And, though the tides have been known to deposit a fair amount of seaweed on its shore, it comes close to idyllic once it's all been washed away. Our suggested walk – a simple downhill stroll to the beach past an old tin mine – is one of the shortest in this book. But take care at the bottom of the access path; the steps have eroded and can get slippery.





THE WALK

DISTANCE: 1KM
 DURATION: 20 MINS
 WALK GRADE: EASY
 BEACH ACCESS: MODERATE

GETTING THERE

Head east on the A394 from Penzance towards Helston and, just before Ashton, take the turning signposted Rinsey. Follow the road all the way down to the car park.

DIRECTIONS

- ① Exit the car park at the back and follow the track all the way down the hill.
- ② When you reach the old tin-mine stack, look out for the beach-access path that leads off diagonally to the right. Follow this down to the sands.
- ③ To return, simply retrace your steps.

THE BEACH

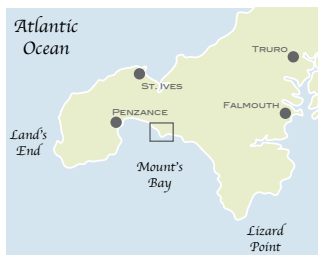
SECLUSION	4
SAND	4
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	3
SWIMMING	3



EBB & FLOW

Rinsey Beach ceases to exist at high tide. But separate sandy and rocky areas are revealed when the sea goes out, making the beach ideal for both lounging and exploring.

OS MAP BEACH REF
SW 593,269
 CAR PARK POSTCODE
TR13 9TS



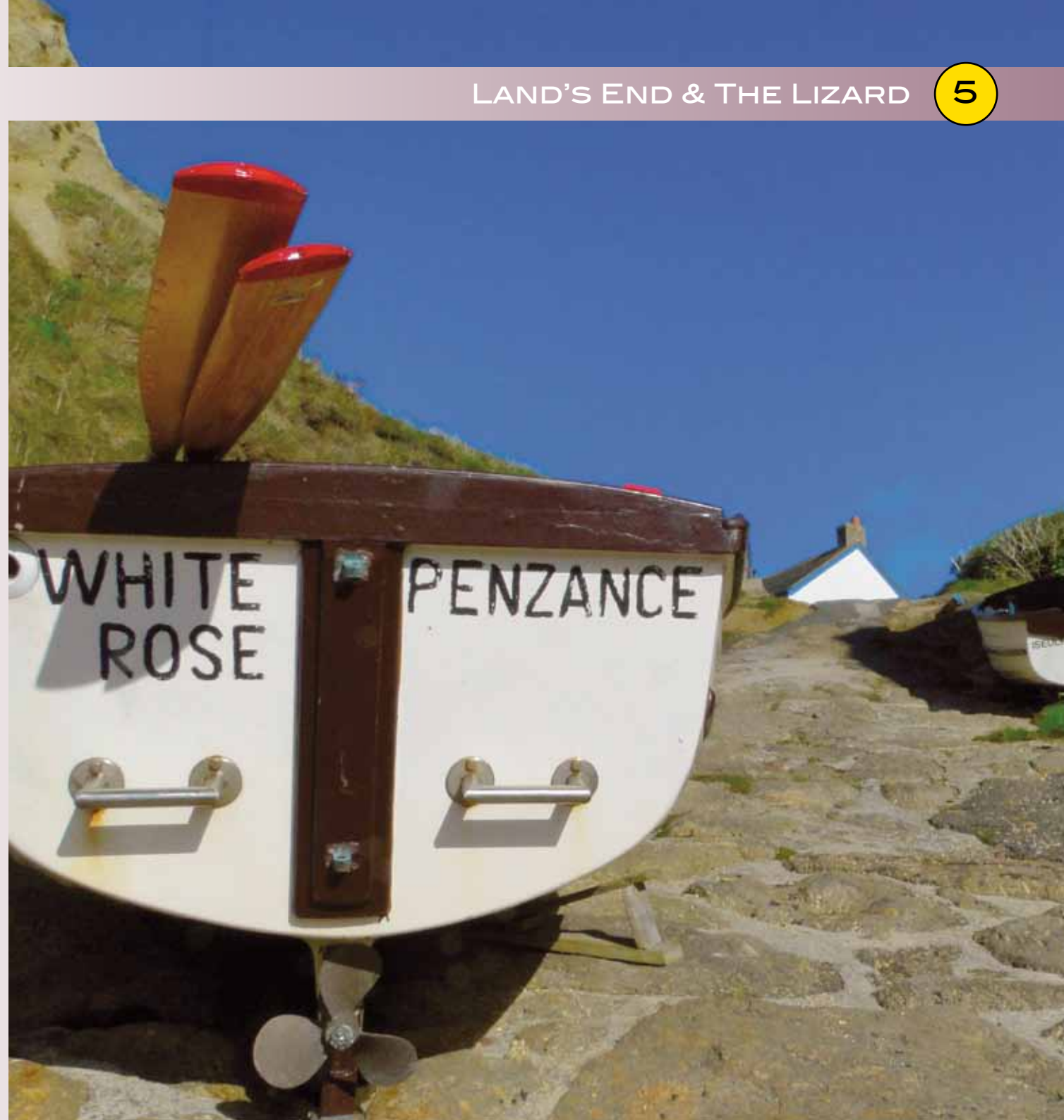
THE PITSTOP

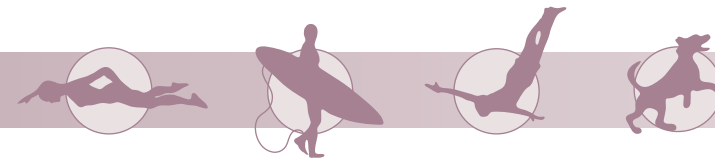
Though the interior – more youth club than cosy country inn – may disappoint after the promise of its white-and-black traditional exterior, The Lion & Lamb in Ashton makes a perfectly good pitstop on this section of the Coastal Path. Winner of the local council's Chefs' Award for its food for the past two years, it does pub grub very well indeed – and the excellent mixed grills, sirloin steaks, and portions of scampi and chips are accompanied on the menu by several good vegetarian and vegan options. If you're just here for a drink – perhaps in one of its two beer gardens – you can take your pick from the likes of Cornish Knocker, Betty Stogs and Spring Chicken, as well as all the usual suspects.

The Lion & Lamb, Fore Street, Ashton, Cornwall TR13 9RW (01736 763227; www.lionandlambashton.co.uk)

PORTH CHAPEL

An idyllic half-moon of enticing yellow sand, Porth Chapel is the sort of secluded beach that anyone with a love of the sea goes to sleep dreaming about. Its setting is simply stunning, and the view from the shore incorporates the remains of an old chapel, a waterfall that pours down flower-flecked cliffs and the spire of St Levan church rising from the fields behind. Our suggested walk should last around an hour, but – what with stopping to admire the scenery – it may well take longer. The walk back inland from the beach, over streams and along grassy pathways, is particularly breathtaking.



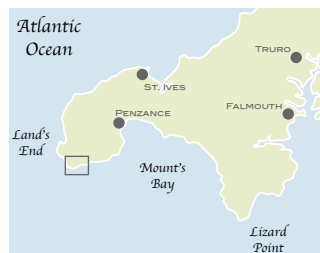


THE WALK

DISTANCE: 3.5KM
DURATION: 1 HOUR
WALK GRADE: MODERATE
BEACH ACCESS: DIFFICULT

GETTING THERE

Take the B3315 from Land's End in the direction of Penzance. Turn right in Polgigga and follow signs to Porthgwarra. Follow the road through the village to the car park. Prices vary, depending on the length of stay.



DIRECTIONS

- ① Exit the car park and follow the lane down to the beach. Find the tunnel on the left-hand side of the cove. Join the Coastal Path, which is signposted beside houses here.
- ② When the path splits after 10 minutes or so, bear right and walk down to Porth Chapel. The beach is accessed via rocks that act as makeshift steps.
- ③ To continue on our suggested route, retrace your steps over a footbridge and take the path inland to the top of a small valley. After a couple of minutes, take the right-hand turning onto a path that leads to the other side.
- ④ Cross a stone footbridge and continue up the lane to St Levan church. Turn left and, after 50 metres, left again onto a lane that crosses a stream.
- ⑤ Walk up this lane, over a stile and into fields. Follow the left-hand edge of the first field and go over the stone steps into the next-door field after around 100 metres.
- ⑥ At the next step of stone steps, cut across the field to the left rather than going over them. Continue in this direction and join the track that leads to Roskestal Farm.
- ⑦ At the farm, turn left along the road and walk towards Porthgwarra. Take the lane that leads off a sharp right-hand turn, and continue on to the village and car park.



THE BEACH

SECLUSION	<div style="width: 60%;"></div>	4
SAND	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	<div style="width: 20%;"></div>	2
SWIMMING	<div style="width: 80%;"></div>	5



EBB & FLOW

Porth Chapel offers a large area of flawless, large-grained sand to enjoy when the sea is out. And, though the beach area is significantly reduced by the incoming tide, the sand is still perfectly accessible.

OS MAP BEACH REF
SW 381,218
 CAR PARK POSTCODE
TR19 6JR



THE PITSTOP

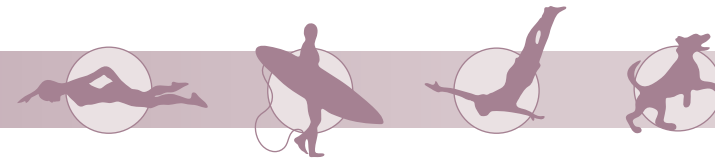
Close to the famous clifftop Minack Theatre, just along the coast from Porth Chapel, the Cable Station Inn at Porthcurno is popular with the pre- and post-show crowds in summer. It might not be the most attractive of pubs - though its flower-fringed outdoor terrace is perfectly pleasant - but there's usually a good atmosphere in its open-plan bar, as well as a fine selection of Sharp's Brewery ales and ciders. It serves decent pub grub all day, too. And if you're there on a warm evening, you might even find yourself getting involved in one of its legendary barbecues.

*Cable Station Inn, Porthcurno, Cornwall TR19 6JX
 [01736 810479; www.cablestationinn.co.uk]*

NANJIZAL

Home to the Song of the Sea, a tall, narrow natural arch that winks at the golden sand, Nanjizal is thought by many to be the finest beach on the Penwith peninsula. It's truly secluded, though; and often deserted. This may be down to its distance from any road or car park. But it's well worth making the effort to walk to, if only to check out its famous slit-like arch and some remarkable natural stone sculptures, including the Diamond Horse – an equine-shaped formation through which sunlight shines with a jewel-like glint. Caves and anenome-studded rockpools emerge when the sea retreats, and there's even a freshwater waterfall, which is ideal for washing off all that post-swim salt. Our suggested walk is a straightforward stroll through fields and farmland, which takes in a short section of the Coastal Path before emerging onto the beach.





THE WALK

DISTANCE: 3.5KM
DURATION: 1 HOUR
WALK GRADE: MODERATE
BEACH ACCESS: EASY

GETTING THERE

Head down the B3315 towards Land's End and stop in Trevescan. Park your car in one of the laybys that are situated on either side of the village, around 200 metres away.

DIRECTIONS

- ① From either layby, walk into Trevescan village. Just opposite the bus stop, you'll see a footpath sign that points down a driveway. Follow this past two cottages (don't worry - it's a public right of way).
- ② Take the path that leads into the fields and through Trevilly Farm. After you've passed through some more fields, bushes start to close up around the path. Keep following it around to the right (don't take the left turn) and walk along the valley-ridge.
- ③ At the point you first see the sea, take the path that leads downhill.
- ④ Go over a footbridge and down a set of wooden steps to the beach.
- ⑤ To return, simply retrace your steps.

THE BEACH

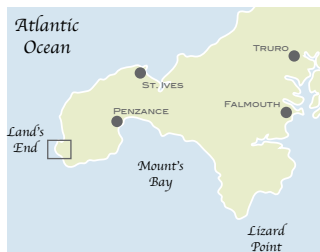
SECLUSION	5
SAND	5
ROCKPOOLS & CAVES	5
SWIMMING	5



EBB & FLOW

Low tide brings large sandy areas, as well as caves and rockpools to explore. At certain times of year, particularly after big storms, the Atlantic strips Nanjizal's beach, revealing the rocks beneath. If the beach is inaccessible, use the grassy headland next to waterfall till the tide goes out.

OS MAP BEACH REF
SW 357,236
 CAR PARK POSTCODE
TR19 7AQ



THE PITSTOP

Formerly the Little Barn Café, the Apple Tree Community Café & Art Studios opened its doors to the public as recently as May 2011. Situated in an old, tin-roofed barn in Sennen, the café lives up to its boho name with a lovely, light, green-and-white interior, in which bunting drapes from the beams, original artworks hang on the walls and the day's specials are chalked up on blackboards. It might not pour pints, but it serves up as much tea, coffee and soft drinks as you can handle, and its breakfasts and light lunches are as lovingly created as the décor. Make sure you try the delicious homemade cakes.

The Apple Tree Community Café & Art Studios, Trevescan, Sennen, Cornwall TR19 7AQ (01736 872753; www.theappletreecafe.co.uk)



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Sunrise over Porth Chapel

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Having left school at 17, Rob Smith moved to France to follow his passion for cooking. Working his way up from plongeur to chef at a variety of restaurants, he travelled from Provence to Paris before returning to the UK to establish monthly listings magazine *The Shoreditch Map*. Each month he would work with a different artist to create a map of the East London district, and wrote articles and listings information to accompany it. The project ran for more than 80 issues. During this time, he produced maps and publications for the NHS, local councils, artists and music events. He also took his self-converted campervan down to Cornwall to begin research for what would eventually become *Secret Beaches: Southwest* – the first of several books on the secluded shores of the British coastline he intends to produce.



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Rob would like to say a huge thank you to Rufus Purdy for his editorial superpowers. As well as being an unflappable editor, he's also a talented and inspiring food and travel writer, so check out his work – or, indeed, attempt to engage his services – at www.rufuspurdy.co.uk.

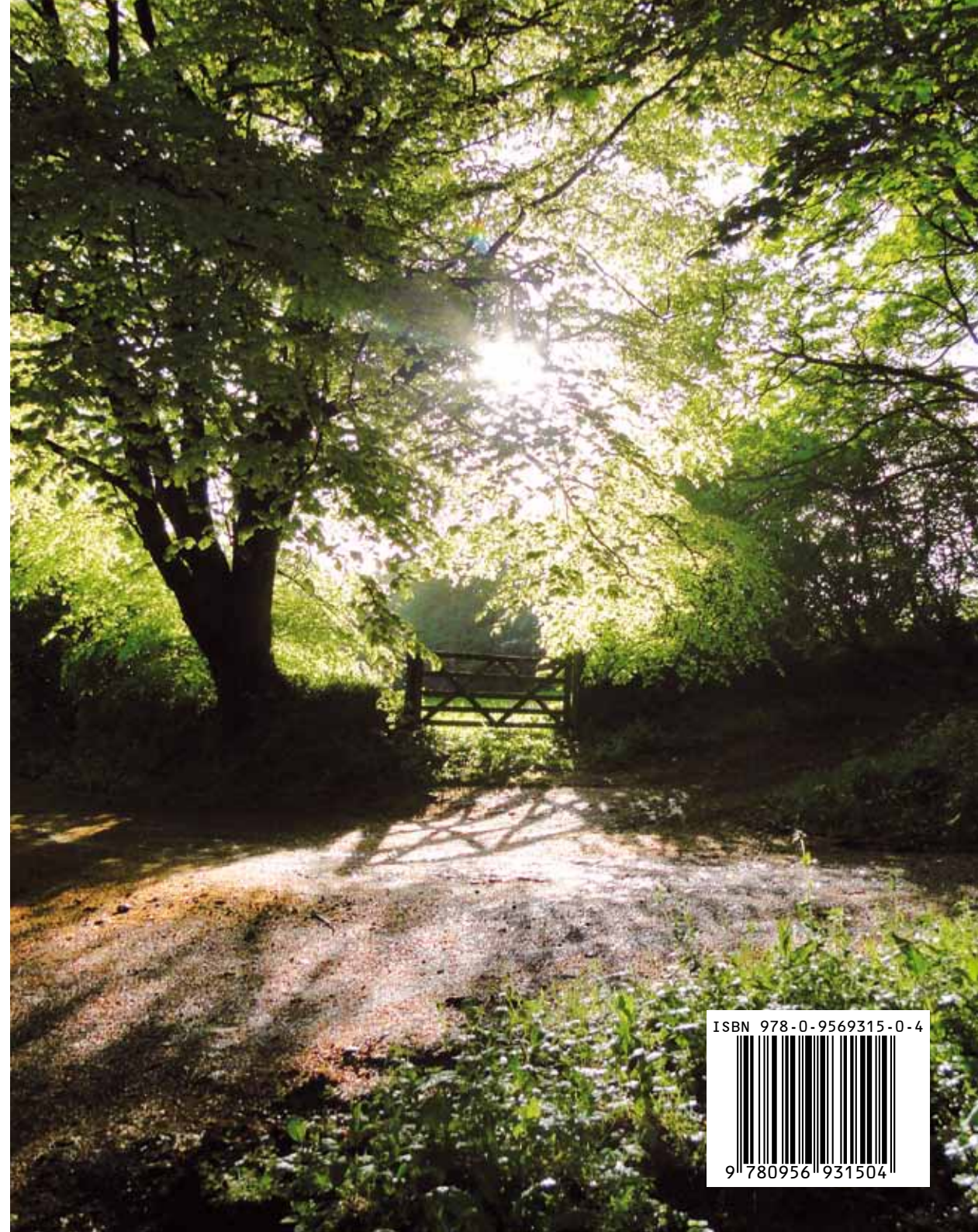
Thanks also go to the following for their support, advice, encouragement, hospitality, laughter and friendship: Catriona, Becky, Katy and Daniel; Bogie and Lydia; Pat and Andy; Amie and Leo; Anne and Nic; Tony and Brad; and, of course, Mum.

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GIVE YOUR SUPPORT

By joining or donating to any of the following charities and organisations, you will be helping to ensure that the beauty and magnificence of the southwest and other UK areas will be maintained for generations to come.

Marine Conservation Society (01989 566017; www.mcsuk.org)
National Trust (0844 800 1895; www.nationaltrust.org.uk)
RSPB (01767 693680; www.rspb.org.uk)
South West Coast Path Association (01752 896237; www.southwestcoastpath.org.uk)
Surfers Against Sewage (01872 553001; www.sas.org.uk)
The Wildlife Trusts (01636 677711; www.wildlifetrusts.org)



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Much more than a guidebook, *Secret Beaches: Southwest* showcases the secluded shores that are strung bead-like along the coastlines of Devon, Cornwall and Dorset. Through detailed walk directions and inspiring photographs, it leads you down forgotten woodland trails and along dramatic clifftop pathways to hidden coves known only to a handful of locals.

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Mat Follas, Masterchef winner and patron of The Wild Garlic restaurant, Dorset

'A pleasing mix of fresh writing, solid information and genuinely useful techno-wizardry'

Clare Gogerty, editor of Coast magazine

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