



National Trust

Walks around Crantock, Cubert and Holywell

If your interest lies in archaeology, wildlife or just having a breath of fresh air this group of National Trust properties is hard to beat. Exposed rocky headlands, sandy surfing beaches, enormous dunes, common land, stream-side habitats, a tidal estuary and mudflats are all found in one relatively small part of north Cornwall a stones throw from Newquay and, by linking in with the Coast Path National Trail, you can combine one or more walks to suit your needs.

WARNING! It is extremely dangerous to bathe at the Gannel end of Crantock Beach or in the tidal channel itself.

Walk 1 Holywell Bay & Kelsey Head

starts and ends at NT car park, Holywell
(£3.50 charge for non-members Easter - October, £1 winter)
Distance: 6674 metres (4 miles, 4.5 with extension to sea-cave)
Time: Approximately 1 3/4 hours
Terrain: Mostly gentle coast path walking, some uneven paths and sand dunes
Facilities: WCs, shops, inns and cafés at Holywell

What to see

This is a varied walk taking in both maritime and calcareous grassland, sand dunes and fenland habitats. Kelsey Head has a variety of archaeological remains including the low bank and shallow ditch of a cliff castle. Offshore is an islet owned by the Trust called the Chick, and seals may be seen from the cliff. Holywell Bay is the largest bay on this stretch of coast with dunes rising to 62 metres (200 feet) behind the beach. At the east end of Holywell Bay and below Kelsey Head is a sea-cave, only accessible at low tide. In it can be found St Cuthbert's Well, a natural spring with a reputation for healing, especially of crippled children.



Seals



Arable weeds



Porth Joke



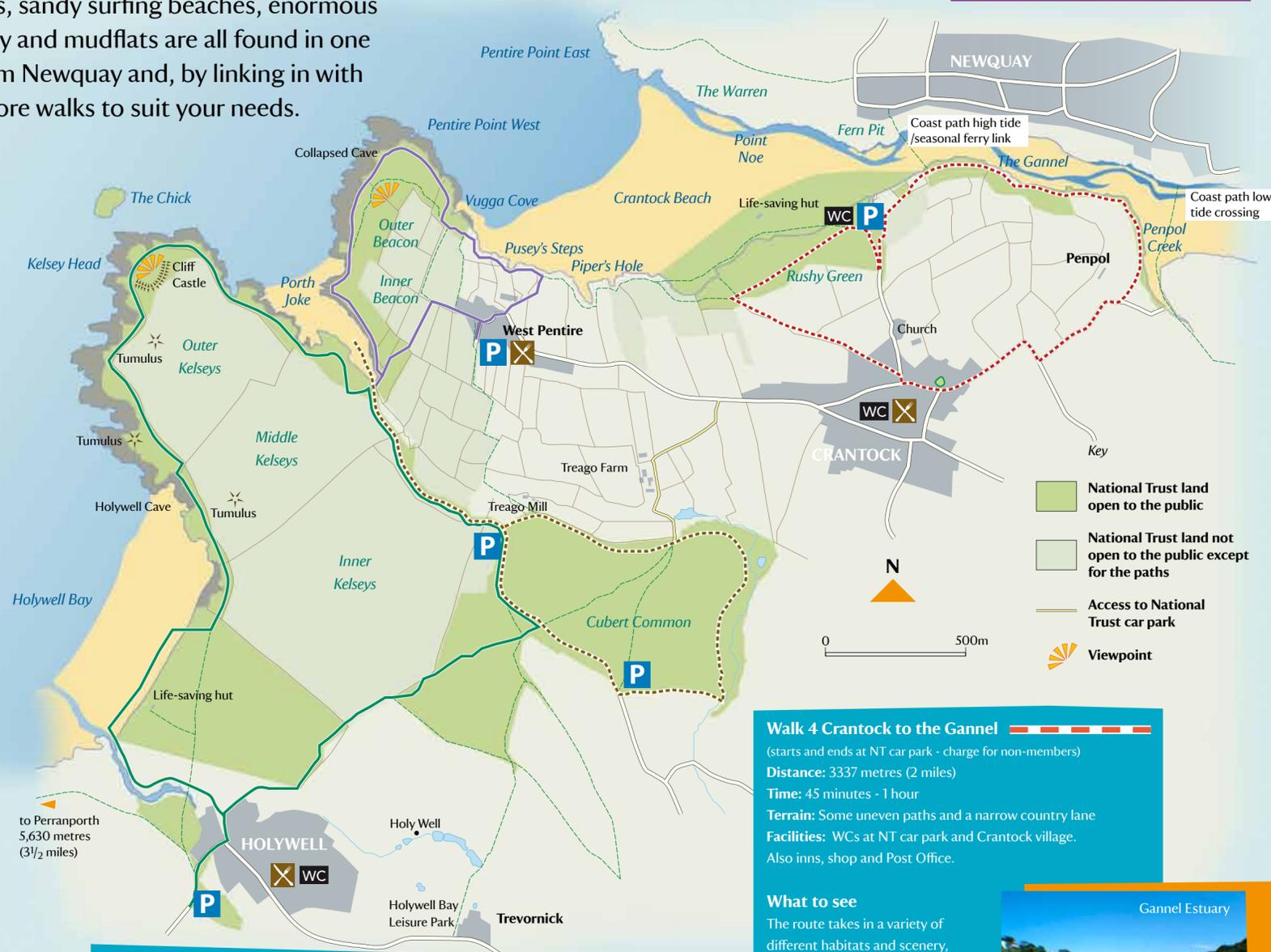
Vugga Cove

Walk 2 West Pentire and Porth Joke

(starts and ends at NT car park - charge for non-members)
Distance: 2249metres (1.5 miles)
Time: 45 minutes
Terrain: Some uneven paths and short, steep slopes
Facilities: Bowgie Inn
Private parking and disabled at West Pentire

What to see

If visiting in late June and July be sure to look out for the abundant poppies and marigolds seeded as part of the West Pentire Arable Weeds Project. The coastline is especially beautiful with Vugga Cove, an ancient fishing cove in a deep inlet, and the sandy un-spoilt Porth Joke. This is a beautiful beach, remote from cars, kiosks and commercialism, and referred to as Polly Joke by local people. The name 'Joke' is derived from the same source as the word 'cough', the crow-like bird once extinct in Cornwall but successfully reintroduced in some areas. There are fine views from Pentire Point, with its ancient field systems and collapsed cave, to Kelsey Head, East Pentire and Crantock Beach.



Walk 3 Cubert Common

(starts and ends at NT car park - Cubert)
Distance: 2249 metres (1.5 miles, 2.5 miles with extension)
Time: 1 hour
Terrain: Gentle
Facilities: Closest, West pentire or Holywell
Parking: NT free car park (£2 summer, £1 winter). Cubert Common accessed by dirt track from Treago Farm.

What to see

Cubert Common is an undulating tract of sandy grassland, much used for riding. It is a registered ancient common and a Site of Special Scientific Interest. Blown shell sand from the Holywell dunes has created a lime-rich soil and it is home to lots of wild flowers, especially cowslips, in the spring. Rabbits are numerous and buzzards soar overhead. There is a fine Bronze Age barrow (burial mound) on the southern side and the sheltered valley leading down to Porth Joke is home to flag iris and marsh orchids.



Marsh orchid



Flag Iris

Walk 4 Crantock to the Gannel

(starts and ends at NT car park - charge for non-members)
Distance: 3337 metres (2 miles)
Time: 45 minutes - 1 hour
Terrain: Some uneven paths and a narrow country lane
Facilities: WCs at NT car park and Crantock village. Also inns, shop and Post Office.

What to see

The route takes in a variety of different habitats and scenery, including salt marshes, woodlands, wetlands, sand dunes and the habitat-rich grasslands of Rushy Green. Numerous seabirds can be seen on the estuary, especially at low tide, and for those interested in archaeology there is the ruined lime kiln and at Penpol Creek. A walk along the western foreshore of the wooded creek at low tide will reveal small quays, flights of steps, mooring rings and chains. Until late in the last century the Gannel was extensively used by shipping until the silting up of the narrow channel by banks of sand.



Gannel Estuary



Bar tailed godwit